

A SAINT'S CALL TO MANKIND

M. M. VARMA



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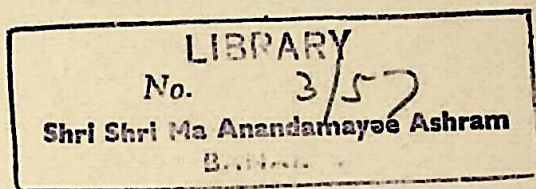
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BANARAS

A SAINT'S CALL TO MANKIND
A PLEA FOR A SPIRITUAL REVALUATION OF LIFE



A SAINT'S CALL TO MANKIND

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OF LIFE

3/5-7

BY
MADAN MOHAN VARMA

WITH A FOREWORD BY
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FOREWORD

THE other day Bertrand Russell wrote that "mankind is collectively engaged under the guidance of fools (*i.e.*, political leaders) and with the ingenuity of slaves (*i.e.*, technicians) in exterminating itself". (I am quoting from memory.) Through these sharp words he is inviting the attention of the world to the spiritual crisis through which it is passing. The human race may put an end to itself by nuclear warfare or preparations for it. This is a practical possibility. This is the result of the failure of man to adjust himself to the technological revolution. The technological revolution liberates man from his servitude to nature. It affords an immense opportunity for world-betterment. It has also the dreadful possibility of man's self-destruction.

The destructive potentialities of increased scientific power and technological skill can be neutralised only by the development of a world community. If human life is to be bearable, such a community must come into existence. This requires a change in

human nature, a great wave of generosity. The world cannot be better than the individuals who compose it. Changes of government or economic systems do not help us to raise the quality of human beings. We must get rid of our self-centredness and develop world loyalty. We have to turn to the discipline of religion for effecting changes in human nature, for saving us from the egotism, individual and collective, of which we are the victims.

In this book Sri Madan Mohan Varma has brought together the discourses of a saint who had a profound influence on him. In our country *satya* and *dharma*, the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue are treated as two sides of the religious life. This central fact is emphasised in this book.

In response to the request of friends and admirers of the saint Sri Varma is publishing this book, which, I hope, will be read widely.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

New Delhi

September 4, 1957

INTRODUCTION

"Dust thou art, to dust returneth" was not spoken of the soul; but rightly, of the body. "We come from the Unmanifest. We stay in the manifest. We go back to the Unmanifest. Our stay in the manifest is for a time only." This is spoken of the soul by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagwad Gita*. The same truth underlies the simple Christian hymn: "We are but strangers here, Heaven is our Home", and, indeed, runs through the accumulated wisdom of the human race.

Man is not only a biological entity or even a "social animal". There is a hidden core of the human personality which lends meaning to life and which gives man no rest till he discovers it. This is the irrepressible Spirit—a ray of God—which is the inner reality of man. Spirituality is the awakening to a conscious communion and unity with it.

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The Indian Renaissance, in particular, has been basically spiritual. From Ramakrishna Paramahansa to Gandhi and Aurobindo of our own times, a line of spiritual personages have proclaimed their dynamic faith in the Divine.

Spirituality, however, has come down to be mystified in popular notion as something beyond the range of normal human understanding, a domain of exceptional personalities, and incompatible with man's practical life in the world in which his lot is cast. Often, too, it is associated with dogma and superstition, which, like the weeds, cover and hide the reality. Many even of the earnest spiritual enquirers, afraid of losing ego to realise the Spirit, are lured into illusory alleys and backwaters of ego itself.

The saint whose discourses are presented in the following pages is one who has been moving, for several years, over various parts of northern India. An unassuming and unsophisticated figure, yet surcharged with a sense of *mission*, tirelessly he moves about, provoking and impelling men to think hard! He addresses himself to all

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men alike. Distinctions of race, religion, sex or creed have, of course, no meaning to him; but he also makes little distinction between the learned and the unsophisticated, the hermit and the householder, or between the environment and the vocations of the *sadhakas*, which according to his approach are only tools of *sadhana* and brand no one as ineligible for spiritual realisation. Truth or spirituality is the heritage of *all* men alike, he affirms. By the transparent sincerity and compelling simplicity of his dissertation, he makes the most abstruse spiritual verities intelligible to the unsophisticated rational mind. He demands no 'blind faith', calls for no 'religiosity', cites no scriptures, flings no occult or esoteric experiences on you. In simple language he taps the simple intelligence of man, and, tracing out the true want of man hidden beneath his multifarious desires, he spotlights the dark corners of the enquirers' sub-consciousness, thereby helping to dispel many a spiritual puzzle that might have baffled him for long. He examines the three natural propensities of

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man—of doing, feeling and thinking—and shows how these have only to be carried to their logical conclusion to be transformed into the truest of action, love and knowledge—*karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana yogas* respectively—ultimately fusing into one. To him the call of the Spirit is not a call alone to the man who chooses the techniques of the mystic and retreats to the forests or to the hills in pursuit of self-realisation, but as much to the man in the daily affairs of life, in every moment and in every circumstance. He holds that Truth is all-pervasive, that *viveka* is the messenger of the Truth that is behind all life and light in man. It is only when man, turning his back on it, identifies himself with his body-self with its desires and possessions that he is led astray and leads others away from peace and happiness, creating fear, suspicion, greed, conflict and war. The crisis of man could only be solved by his realising his spiritual potential and his true mission in life, which would spontaneously result in non-injury, non-appropriation, desirelessness, freedom from fear, selfless

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service and self-realisation. What is important for man is to determine the goal of his hidden urge once for all, to live for that alone and to use all his possessions (physical or intellectual) and circumstances for advance towards the goal. Any artificial division of life into the spiritual and the temporal can have no place in the life of the true spiritual aspirant.

The saint's approach, thus—being based on *experience*—is universal and rational in its appeal; and though a man of little 'learning' so-called, he dumbfounds erudite philosophers and pundits by the incisive logic of his presentation, and no matter what questions are posed at him by whomsoever it may be, these at no time baffle him or make him blink for a moment. At the same time, his exposition, while particularly suited to the modern age of rationalism, underlines afresh the fundamental unity of the deeper teachings of all the religions and the spiritual teachers of mankind, the unity which is recognised by all who have probed into their inner content.

Yet this man, though in a *sanyasi's* garb, meets you as man to man, a loving friend and comrade accessible to all alike, and in outer life adapting himself to the ways of others, with no pose about him. And he would not allow one to give out his name in publications. "Truth cannot be circumscribed by any individual or his exposition. Truth is self-effulgent"—he would reply and reduce one to silence !

The discourses of the saint (who prefers to remain anonymous in print) have been published already in a series of Hindi books, viz., *Sant Samagam*, *Manav Ki Mang* and *Jiwan Darshan*. These books have had a warm réception¹ from a large circle of spiritual seekers; and there has been a growing demand for an English version of the saint's message.

It is with the purpose of sharing the message of this inspiring personality with

¹ Acknowledging the *Sant Samagam*, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, was pleased to observe : " I have had the privilege of meeting Swamiji on one or two occasions, and I was very deeply impressed by the way in which he dealt with most complicated problems in a simple, intelligible way. I am therefore very happy to receive the two volumes in which you have collected some of his discourses. "

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spiritual seekers of the English-knowing world that an attempt has been made, with his consent, in the following pages to render into free English selections from his discourses given in Hindi, compiled and arranged subjectwise as far as practicable for the convenience of the reader. A certain amount of repetition or overlapping has perhaps been unavoidable on account of the universality of the saint's central thought running through the various themes; but perhaps such repetition will only help the reader to enter into the fundamental spirit of his message, its simple content and wide application. The rendering would doubtless be found short in several respects, which, it is hoped, the generous reader will condone as the shortcoming of a humble translator.

A glossary of certain Sanskrit words has been given at the end of the book, which it is hoped will be found useful.

Some of these essays (or parts thereof) had originally appeared as articles in *The Theosophist*, Adyar; *The Kalyan-Kalpataru*, Gorakhpur; *The Theosophical Review*, Varanasi; *The Call Divine*, Bombay; and

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The Vision, Kanhangad. I am grateful to the Editors of these Journals for their kind permission to make use of these articles in this book.

MADAN MOHAN VARMA

JAIPUR

September 7, 1957

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CHAPTER I

MAN AND HIS GOAL—THE LIGHT OF VIVEKA

THE first question which the seeker must enquire into is what is his ultimate destination, his hidden want; for no traveller can chalk out the plan for his journey unless he knows or believes where he is to go.

Attachment to the changeful objects of desire and yearning for Reality are the two opposite components of a man's being.

As no massing of clouds can obliterate the sun, but can only hide the sun from our eyes for a while, even so no motley of fleeting desires can kill our inherent and real want—they can only cover it up temporarily. Just as the dawn of the sun dissipates the clouds in no time, so does the awakening of the inner want and aspiration of man free one from all fleeting desires.

Man's innermost thirst for Truth or God can never be satisfied with any compound beings,

objects or circumstances. The most pleasing set of objects or circumstances by themselves are like a well-decorated house where you may be without a friend, a lonely soul. Devoid of faith in the Divine, man is like a body without soul; an ornamented body, a well-decorated house, a beautiful garden, but a lone resident therein.

The Infinite, which is our goal, is the Eternal whose Light and Love give light and life to all passing things.

The very fact that nothing is able to destroy the natural yearning of man for love and joy shows that the Lord of Love and Joy is ever calling man to his hidden heritage.

Before the fulfilment of our inner want, we run after the world but the world eludes us. On the fulfilment of our inner want, the world will run after us but not we after the world.

The realisation of one's want enables one to set up one's goal. Thereafter, a divine discontent carries one forward.

Man must carefully think over and determine what is his goal. The goal can only be that which is of his own inmost nature, and therefore attainable. When the goal is set up, the means come of themselves.

Our daily affairs and necessities do not constitute our life; they are merely bubbles in the sea of life.

The secret of rising above objects and circumstances is to regard them all as a means to an end and never the end. If our gaze is fixed on the goal, we will make the best use of all these, which will only help us in attaining the goal. We should remember that no one, no object and no circumstance is to blame for our helpless state, but that imperfection is the very nature of transitory life, which includes our body and the world. Yearning for our real want is for that which is immutable: the Divine Eternal.

As the thirsty man drinks water eagerly, so *sadhana* comes naturally to one whose goal is established. When the *sadhaka* has set up his goal once for all, and does all work for the sake of the goal, all his work becomes worship. The light of *viveka* illumines his path, and indeed *viveka* becomes the captain of his soul till the goal is reached.

Viveka is the light of Wisdom that is rooted in man and marks him out from the sub-human creation. It is not the same thing as the intellect, but is that from which the intellect derives its force. The intellect is a

mechanism of nature, whereas *viveka* is the supra-mental light illuminating it. As the sun is the source of the electric or the candle light, so is *viveka* the source from which the intellect and the senses derive their light and power. *Viveka* is the light of Truth whose ray is embedded in the innermost shrine of the heart of man and which leads pilgrim man to the realisation of his being an image of the Divine.

Viveka enlightens us that man is not the human skeleton, but Consciousness focussed in the human body. What he is—Consciousness—is the hidden target of discovery for the individual. But it should be discernible to each thinking man that he is not the body, even though normally he may be all too body-conscious. Each man calls the body *his* body, not himself; and there are many men who are ready to lay down their bodies to protect something they value higher—honour of self, family, country, etc.—or who would rather be released from the body if faced with an incurable and agonising malady in the body. What, then, does man find himself to be? A being or consciousness who is discontented with his incompleteness—reflected in his unceasing desires—and is impelled by an urge for fulfilment, perfection or liberation, being endowed

with *viveka* which guides him onward all along, this is what man actually finds himself to be. It follows, therefore, that man's life must be a process of *sadhana* : a conscious aspiration and ceaseless effort to emerge from want to fulfilment, from imperfection to perfection, from bondage to liberation. *Sadhana*-less living is living by instinct, the life of the sub-human ; or it is the life of the liberated man who has fulfilled himself through the school of human life—not of the normal man. Man as he is, is an entity of conscious *sadhana*. Unconscious gifts one finds even in many trees, but they do not equate with man for they lack the self-awareness of *viveka*. Non-possession is the attribute of many animals, but none calls them *sanyasis*. So, it is *viveka*, or self-awareness, which marks out man as the highest of God's creation, verily made in the image of God.

Mystics, saints and sages of all lands and ages have offered their testimony that, eventually, man must inevitably realise his kinship or unity with the True, the Good and the Beautiful—the Divine, or by whatever name we call that ultimate Reality. His transitional identification with the outer appearances imposed upon him by age-long habit then disappears. In other words, the manhood of

man consists in a process of his integration into completeness, which is a mark of divinity.

True integration of man's personality is not possible without control of the senses, transmutation of selfishness into selfless service and of fissiparous thoughts into contemplation of God or yearning for Truth. These are labelled as the paths of *yoga—karma, bhakti and gnana* respectively.

The part enacted by an actor on the stage is not his *swarupa*. The states of wakefulness, dream and *sushupti* are the states of the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies of man. The true man is beyond these three states of the object world.

Knowledge is one; but we experience it at different levels—one through the senses, a second through the mind and a third direct by oneself. This threefold knowledge may be considered relatively progressive knowledge. But all these three states of knowledge are illumined by one Supreme Consciousness. As the sun is the sole source of light to the eye and of electricity, so is the Divine the sole repository of all knowledge and consciousness. *Viveka* is the light of the Divine. -

As the clouds born of the heat of the sun itself hide the sun for a while, even so the

knowledge at the level of the senses beclouds the intellect and the knowledge at the level of the intellect hides true supra-mental knowledge. *Viveka* pertains to that level of man's consciousness whose light enables him to see the fleeting phenomena of the body, the mind and all things and states as on the screen : the non-Self.

Truth, being self-aware and sure of itself, is infinitely patient. Just as salt does not beat the drum of its own flavour but brings out goodness in everything which it contacts, so does Truth impart light and life to everything. *Viveka* is the light of Truth.

Man rightly calls his body his body, his mind his mind, and so on. But he does not pause to enquire who *he* is. As soon as he dissociates himself from the body, the mind and their environment, he will stand by himself and know himself. Ask any man if he is the same person who was studying in the same school with another who is now in entirely different circumstances. One might be highly placed, while another might be a beggar. The circumstances of the two are now widely different; but both know themselves to be the same as they were as school-mates. Thus any change in their bodily circumstances and environment does not affect their awareness

of what they are. This shows that man by himself is distinct from his surroundings.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' arises in the mind of a man when he finds himself bound in limitations but swelling with an inner urge to cut asunder the bonds of environment and states of mind. The false 'I' is but a yearning for its real content. Put otherwise, it is like unto a thief who elopes the moment the master 'I' dawns on man's consciousness.

Aham-vritti is the disease, while *Aham-sphurti* is its cure. The latter consumes the former and what remains then is effortless awareness, which is Self-realisation.

An investigation into the content of the false 'I' will reveal that the *swarupa* of the real 'I' is the hidden want and aspiration of the former, even though dissipated in numerous reflections of desire.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' or yearning after God arises in a man only after he has repaid the debts of society by selfless service. Man identified with the body is an embodiment of the calls of society. Deeper down he is a longing for the Divine.

Desire is born in man because he identifies himself with his body. The cessation of desire for the fleeting robs the passing I-sense of its

main prop. It then survives for a time on the desire for the eternal, which consumes what remains of him till he resurrects into divinity. As the concept 'I am His devotee' or 'I am a seeker of Truth'—i.e., *one* all-consuming aspiration—replaces a medley of desires, God or Truth does not take long to own the aspiring soul. Aspiration is directed to one, desire to a multitude of objects.

All the various rules of conduct prescribed by different religions are meant only to rid man of his body-consciousness through right action, of the subtle body by right thinking, of the causal body by detachment, etc. With the dissolution of body-consciousness, Self-realisation dawns by itself. It is only until man has not realised his true Self that the aspirant engages in various efforts to unwind the false identification with which he has bound himself. The dawn of *viveka* and the ending of body-consciousness constitute a simultaneous process. The elimination of 'I am the body' concept is the gift of *viveka*; the false belief 'I am the body' is the delusion created by *aviveka*. The sunrise of *gnana* dispels in a flash the age-long nightmare of darkness. *Viveka* is not a matter of practice, it is the fruit of all practices.

As the eye can see every object, but no one can see the eye, so One who knows everything and is selfluminous is the Self or the Divine—who cannot be perceived by the intellect or seen by the eye. Even as the light of the candle merges in the light of the sun, so does the knowledge of the senses merge in the knowledge of the Self.

Viveka is the self-sufficient torch-bearer of truth ; for it is the light of Truth itself. Thus, when *viveka* is ablaze there is effortless awareness, supreme *gnana*. Effort pertains to the 'I' and lasts only until it has not consumed the 'I' itself. All *sadhana* is meant to lead to *sadhana*-lessness. Realisation dawns when the 'I' has set. The 'I' is motion ; *gnana* is the stillness of the Self. Just as where light is, darkness is not, so in stillness there is no motion of effort.

Viveka is the true *guru*. Just as the fragrance emitted by the flower is in fact latent in the seed as well as in the tree, but it is given to the flower to emanate it by virtue of its perfection, so is Truth or God, though omnipresent, revealed to man by Flowers of the race, saints, and sages. The *guru*—saint or sage—accordingly is *viveka* itself personified. The person who remains indifferent to his own *viveka* remains indifferent to the *guru*

and the scriptures as well, as one who closes his eyes to the light cannot derive light even from the sun. Man can escape the *guru*, the leader and the laws of society or government ; but he cannot escape his own *viveka*.

In fact, as in all sweetmeats the sweetness is of the sugar, so is all that appears true and beautiful a reflection of *viveka*.

As the pure waters of a flowing river, enclosed in a pit, breed various germs, so does universal love, encased in a body, object or environment degenerate into *moha*. The ego is the limiting agency.

Viveka is the splitter of the ego, which is the atom of the spiritual world. The splitting of the ego is the key to *moksha* and the realisation of Truth. Truth is the substratum that is eternal and knows no change ; untruth is that which floats on the screen, an influx of ever-changing appearances. The latter feeds on desires ; the former is what remains on the cessation of desires.

CHAPTER II

DESIRELESSNESS

Viveka makes it plain to a thinking man that he is not the body, and starts him on his voyage of self-discovery. The seeker henceforth knows no rest till he realises the truth of his being, and in that process of discovery consists the whole gamut of his psychic evolution. The awakening of *viveka* marks the spiritual unfolding of man.

A fundamental test—a veritable touchstone—of one's progress on the path is the measure of his desirelessness; for when *viveka* illumines the mind, all dark corners of desire vanish.

Desire is born of *aviveka*, by man identifying himself with the body. There is no desire which has not its root in man's body-consciousness. Indeed, desire is the direct product of one's identifying oneself with, or attaching oneself to, an individual, an object or an environment. This is a symptom of *aviveka*. Man has truly and firmly set his foot on the spiritual path only when, through *viveka*, he

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has awakened to his not being the body. Therefore, desirelessness is the first and foremost fruit of *viveka*. It is the base on which alone the temple of spirituality can be raised. Desire throws us outwards; love of the Divine takes us inwards. To love the Divine, one must be free from the desires of the senses. "One cannot eat the cake and have it."

imp Desire cuts both ways. If indiscriminately fulfilled, it produces attachment, which causes it to rise again and again. If suppressed, it produces anger and resentment, which cloud and confuse the mind. Thus, either way it produces disharmony.

Even as the outgoing waters of the river flow into the sea, then evaporate in the form of clouds, rain down and rejoin the rivers and again flow back into the sea, so the man of desires continues to be drawn into the sea of *maya*, revolving in the vicious circle of so-called life and death. In a life of indulgence in desires there is strain, not rest; motion, not equanimity; *bhoga*, not *yoga*; excitement, not peace. In the life of Self-realisation, on the other hand, there is *yoga*, peace, joy and immortality.

When one truly despairs of the world giving one lasting happiness, one's desires die and

one practically gets a foretaste of death. A desireless soul is not afraid of death, but awaits death as a prospective passenger awaits the train when the signal is down. That, in reality, is *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is like a fire which burns the wood of *raga*. As the fire itself subsides after burning the wood, so does *vairagya* also subside after consuming *raga*—when only *gnana* shines, self-luminous.

There is no *viveka*, no *tyaga*, no *tapas* higher than true *vairagya*. True *vairagya* raises one above one's physical, subtle and causal bodies and ushers one into Life Eternal. Further, as a bye-product, it illumines and beautifies the fleeting life while it lasts. That is to say, all the virtues associated with divinity spontaneously flower in the aspirant. *Vairagya* does not mean hatred or contempt for the body or the world, but only equanimity by giving them their right place. Like sewage, it irrigates the world and leaves it more prosperous.

True *vairagya* means the raising of the value of the enjoyer above the transitory objects of enjoyment.

Many persons pose *vairagya* with the world because they have had disappointments, frustrations and bereavements. They, however,

retain their attachment to their bodies. This is false *vairagya*, and only produces *dwesha* towards others, which is another name for *raga*; for *raga* and *dwesha* are two sides of the same coin. The body is the world in miniature and is made of the same stuff; and, indeed, for the individual consciousness the world is a projection of one's body-consciousness. True *vairagya* springs from one's realising the phantasmagoria of the body. Then only one is truly detached from the world, and is dissociated from it completely. It is impossible to be detached from the world while one is attached to one's body. As long as one is identified with one's body, one is bound to be attached to the world and the pose of *vairagya* is a passing reaction, a remedy worse than the disease.

What distinguishes desire from the true want of a soul is this. Desire is a pursuit which allures, but from whose course the soul achieves nothing: a mirage. The true want of man restores one to the Beloved, through single-minded and one-pointed aspiration. Indeed, what distinguishes a spiritual *sadhaka* from the ordinary man of the world is that whereas the latter runs after manifold desires, the desires of the former have fused into one

central desire: intense aspiration to realise God or Truth.

The man of many desires casts long shadows over his fellow-beings. Only a desireless soul can be a true servant of mankind. Creative energy flows out of the desireless soul, not from the mud of desire. Desire is a dissipation of energy.

Desire is the food, the source of sustenance, of the ego. The cessation of desire makes for the disappearance of the ego. With the disappearance of the ego opens the flood-gate of Life Divine.

The natural want of man is covered over by the unnatural phantom of desire. When the natural want of man consumes the artificial desire, he becomes desireless; and Life eternal follows desirelessness, even as the day follows the night.

The *sadhaka* should ponder over what makes any object or body in the world of appearances glow with beauty or loveliness. The truth of the matter is that whatever the object to which the Self lends itself, that object glows with the light of the Self. The wise one does not run after the shadow. The *sadhaka* who is still distracted by the objects of the senses has not yet realised that just as the sweetness

in all sweetmeat is of the sugar, so whatever taste or attraction appears anywhere in anything is His.

The world appears to be indispensable to man only as long as he is bound to it by attachments. When attachments are dissolved, the *sadhaka* realises his freedom. Desirelessness is the key to fearlessness.

The world does not love one who constantly begs from the world. A moment lived in desirelessness is more significant than a hundred years lived in desire.

The pleasures of the senses—for which desires cater—are an animal or sub-human target, not human.

As a gardener removes the weeds from the grass, even so the *sadhaka* removes desires from his mind.

How to attain desirelessness ?

Desire can only die a natural death when we are not in a state of want. The state of want is caused by our identifying ourselves with individuals, objects and environment. Detachment from these releases our true nature, which is the Self and which is free from any want. For the *sadhaka*, however, whose *viveka* is not yet enough of a flame to burn out all desire a few useful ideas are suggested.

The first step towards freeing one's self from desire is to introspect one's desires; to fulfil only such desires as relate to the present, which it is in our power to fulfil and the fulfilment of which does not involve harm to another. At the same time, in the fulfilment of such desires too one should refrain from indulging in the sense of excitement thereof, for that would bind us and cause such desires to recur again and again and form a vicious circle. The rest of the desires must be surrendered by deep thought. Restricting ourselves to the fulfilment of inescapable desires only gives the strength to renounce superfluous desires, and releases *viveka*. The only place that a limited fulfilment of desires has in the life of an aspirant is to allow the same, within limits as laid down by *dharma*, with the purpose of outgrowing them through experience. Otherwise, the fleeting sensation of pleasure in the fulfilment of desires would cause a chain of ever-fresh rounds of desire and make a vicious whirlpool.

The fulfilment of such desires should not, however, leave any trail of *samskaras* on one's mind for being reaped in the future. There must be no contemplation of the objects of desire with reference to the past or to the

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future. Contemplation of desired objects is worse than the fulfilment of desires.

Secondly, the *sadhaka* should engage himself solely in discharging the obligations to others which he has incurred as a result of his former identifications. This means that he must fulfil the rights of others by the performance of his duties to them; and that whatever rights he has imagined to be his, as a result of *aviveka*, must be renounced by him. The sense of one's rights, in a *sadhaka*, only betrays his own sense of poverty. The man who claims rights from another has in fact subordinated himself to another, for he has made his satisfaction and happiness dependent on another's mercy. The *sadhana* of man consists in his yearning to meet his Beloved or to realise Truth. When the *sadhaka* is freed from desire, he is freed from all bondage and attains life in Truth and Freedom.

The fulfilment of others' rights by our service, and the renunciation of one's own so-called rights, is thus, the first step towards desirelessness. This implies selfless service of others. The *sadhaka* should not indulge in any *pravritti* which is not of service to another.

Paradoxical as it may seem, complete discharge of one's duty to another frees one from attachment to the other.

Atonement and prayer, control of the senses, contemplation of God or quest after Truth are some of the other useful aids to the *sadhaka* seeking to rid himself of desires.

True renunciation is of the whole, not of a part. As long as a single desire remains to pollute the mind, it is a potential nucleus of disease.

The ending of desire does not come from any change in one's environment, but by the right use of one's existing environment. Right use of one's environment is the surest means of release from the environment as well as from desire and *pravritti*.

The desireless man hears for the pleasure of the speaker; speaks for the pleasure of the listener; eats for the pleasure of the feeder; meets for the pleasure of the others; indeed, he lives only for the service of others or for the pleasure of his Lord.

CHAPTER III

THE PATH OF ACTION—DHARMA— PRAVRITTI AND NIVRITTI

THE average spiritual aspirant is often puzzled by the question: how is he to act in this world of activity, with all the obligations he has to discharge in his innumerable relationships and amidst all the various conflicts and difficulties which confront him in practical life? This problem does not pose itself before one in whose mind is awakened a genuine quest for Truth or in whose heart is kindled a deep love for the Divine, for *jigyasa* and *bhakti* blaze their own light on the path of the aspirant. The devotee who has established his relationship with the Divine or Truth performs all actions on the basis of that relationship, and thus all his actions lead to union with the Divine. Those who have attained desirelessness have nothing left to *do*. But the others have to learn to discharge their duties selflessly and efficiently before they can attain

desirelessness. For the beginner, therefore, whose *viveka* is not yet fully awakened and who is still infested with many desires the problem poses itself in all fierceness and often confuses his understanding.

First of all, it should be clearly understood that action by itself—i.e., a repetition of actions without purpose—is of little spiritual significance. *Pravritti* should be regarded as but a stepping-stone to *nivritti*. Only such *pravritti* drags on its endless trail of existence as is not pursued with a spiritual purpose. *Dharma* provides spiritual purpose. A *pravritti* pursued in the light of *dharma* is transformed into *nivritti*. Indeed an action performed completely—as it should be—should enable a person to rise above it and not to be caught in its multifarious reactions. *Dharma* is a bridge-builder between *pravritti* and *nivritti*. One who indulges in a *pravritti* in the light of *dharma* rises above it at the end of the *pravritti*, and the mode of his *pravritti* becomes an example to others ; for perfection in *pravritti* gives birth to *nivritti*. Even as purified arsenic cures many a disease, so do even pleasures indulged in the light of *dharma* exhaust themselves and pave the way to *nivritti*. A desire persists only as long as we

have not acquired true knowledge of the desired object. *Dharma*, which is the light of *viveka*, lays bare the illusoriness of the desired objects. All *pravritti*, or wild goose chase of pleasures, prompted by instincts and not pursued in the light of *dharma*, makes a vicious circle of bondage. The light of *dharma* leads to release.

Dharma is an all-pervasive ocean, whereof all actions performed in the discharge of duties are like waves. All actions derive their purpose and significance from the immutable laws of *dharma*. Without *dharma*, action is like a rudderless bark.

Pravritti is like a river whose flow takes one to the ocean of the world. *Nivritti* takes one to the source of the river and raises him above the world of appearances. *Pravritti* exists not only in action but also in thought and in enjoyment of states of consciousness. Even good deeds only give limited fruits, but they cannot lead one to *ananda* inasmuch as they spring from ego-consciousness, however subtle. *Nishkam karma*, which is the spontaneous, desireless action of the egoless, leads to *ananda*. To sublimate good deeds into *nishkam karma* the *sadhaka* should remember that in any good action there should be more of *bhava-shakti*

than *kriya-shakti*. *Kriya* should merge in *bhava* and *bhava* in the goal. Action and *bhava* are only a *sadhana* for realising the Divine; they cease to have any significance of their own when the Divine is realised.

There is a distinction between *karma* and *kriya*. What is not *done* but takes place by itself is *kriya*; while what is *done* with motives (good or bad) is *karma*. A *sadhaka* who does not regard himself as the doer is not bound by the results of his actions; for his actions, so to say, while taking place through him, are no longer prompted by him but are prompted by the Divine.

Another important principle which the aspirant must always remember is that objects and circumstances constitute the changeful life of man. In reality, they are not his life, but only the instruments for his attaining Life. The Divine Plan which dispenses these things to man is full of love and justice; and it dispenses just such sets of them to man as provide the best means for his growth and progress. So, each spiritual aspirant, instead of fretting against them, should manfully utilise the same towards the best end. They are a product of man's own doings, a shadow cast by his own ego. He can rise above them

only by knowing them to be not himself, but his tools of work. Only a bad workman quarrels with his tools. For the man of action, all the obstacles and difficulties that appear in the way of his *sadhana* of good works are in the nature of *tapa*. *Tapa* generates the necessary power and strength which overcomes all difficulties.

✓ Everyone is free in making right use of his circumstances, but not to reap the fruits thereof, which are in the hands of Providence.

Objects and circumstances—including one's body and mind—constitute only the field of one's work. But when the actor, from whom these derive their sustenance, begins to feed on them and to become attached to them, the whole thing gets topsyturvy. The essence of spiritual science is the art of living without dependence on objects, circumstances or relationships.

The world is like a school where man is born to learn and to get out. The perfection of action is transcendent inaction. But, before man reaches the stage of not seeing, he will have to learn to see rightly; before he learns not to speak, he will have to learn to speak rightly; before he ceases to hear, he will have to learn to hear rightly; before the mind

becomes still and ceases to think, he will have to think rightly. Thus, right action is a necessary preparation for transcendent inaction. In other words, release from action can come only through right action. Right action means the use of *pravritti* only for the benefit of those with whom one's particular *pravrittis* are connected. The vindication of action is in the fulfilment of the rights of others and in the renunciation of one's own supposed rights. The former will lead to release from all the accumulated attachments ; the latter will prevent the formation of fresh attachments. All such *pravrittis* should be renounced as are not for the good of others and for the pleasure of God. When one's *pravritti* is directed solely to the benefit of others, his *pravritti* automatically leads to pure *nivritti*.

Action performed for one's own pleasure is *bhoga*. Action performed for the happiness and benefit of others is *seva*. One who indulges in the former is not a *sadhaka*.

To postpone the work of the present to the future and to cogitate over such work as is not of the present ; not to do what we can do and to worry about what we cannot do ; to do what we should not do and not to do what we should do ; to assume as ours the body that is not ours

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but the world's—all these comprise wrong action. To realise the unity of the individual and the world; renunciation of attachment to what really is not ours but belongs to the Cosmos; right use of what is allotted to us—all these comprise right action. We use up our apparatus and capacity in doing what is not our work and in stretching our hands before the world for happiness which the poor thing has not in its power to give—which indeed it is itself yearning for—instead of in rendering whatever service we can to the world.

The perfect discharge of one's duties frees the doer from any egoistic ties of doership. Devotion to duty is itself a form of yoga. If you put the whole of yourself into your work, you will experience *nivritti* after each *pravritti*. Men ordinarily think of *nivritti* while in *pravritti* and of *pravritti* in moments of *nivritti*; hence they seldom experience true *nivritti*. Nor do they do justice to their work.

The pith of action is love. Action devoid of love is barren. Thus, the truth of the doer is love. Service of fellow-beings is a bridge between work and the Lord of works. Work that is for one's own gratification invariably leads to death; whereas all work which is done

in the service of fellow-beings and springs from love leads to Self-realisation and Immortality.

Justice in action consists in making the person to whom justice is dispensed see his fault and thus to help him free himself from it. Justice, therefore, from the spiritual point of view, is justice tempered with love.

Vice is done, while virtue flows through one who is free of egoism. Virtue is universal; vice is the function of the ego. Even a virtue if one is conscious of possessing it, becomes a vice because it gets tainted with the ego. Therefore, all 'doing' has ultimately to dissolve into 'being' for the soul to realise the Divine.

A spiritual *sadhaka* should know that the sole justification for his contacts with the ever-changing world is the compulsion of *duty*. A dutiful life only is the life of the *sadhaka*. In the discharge of duty man has the urge to give happiness to others; in self-indulgence, which is the attribute of the sub-human kingdom, one has the desire to snatch happiness from others. The latter, even in his approach to God, stretches the beggar's hand, whereas the true man offers himself in sacrifice. Duty seemingly done with any desire for achievement of anything is not true spiritual *sadhana*.

Good conduct, service, renunciation, if arising from any desires, are unworthy of a devotee. Even the worship of God, if related to anything of the world, is not true devotion.

Right action is the key to our service to, and reform of, society. Actionlessness (rising above the sense of doership) is the key to liberation. Liberation is above the realm of the ego, not in any set of objects and circumstances. Truth has its abode in the heart of man, not in any forest retreat or mountain-cave. The latter can at best be a means of *sadhana*. The stillness of the mind is the true mountain-cave. If you do not see the mountain-cave or the forest retreat in the home and in the midst of society, then you will see the home and society in the forest and the mountain-cave also. If you do not have a vision of *viyoga* in *sanyoga* then *sanyoga* will haunt you in *viyoga*.

Be well assured that duty well done never remains debt-laden to the doer. It always passes him on to the Lord of work. Therefore, abidance in the discharge of duty for duty's sake and indifference to the circumstances and objects which are given to one as tools constitute a great *sadhana* for everyone.

By not doing what should not be done one will learn either the science of right action or one will rise above action. Till we do not renounce what is not to be done, right action is impossible. This suggests why we are often unsuccessful in our *sadhana* through action. Otherwise, *siddhi* is inherent in *sadhana*. By renouncing what should not be done, right action flows by itself; one has not to make any effort to do it, nor is it found difficult.

What is not to be done is only what we do not want others to do to us, *i.e.*, the forfeiting of the rights of others, the withholding of love and seeing the faults of others, etc. To sum up, whatever is against one's *viveka*, should not be done.

Everyone is free to discharge his duties. For duty is never that in discharging which man is not free. The Divine never expects one to do what is not in one's power to do. The eye has to see rightly, it is not expected to learn to hear; the ear has to hear rightly, it is not expected to see, etc. One can attain the goal by doing what he can do. What one cannot do is not his duty; it can only be a false lure of ambition or desire.

One's duties can be divided into three categories :

- (1) protection of the rights of society ;
- (2) the quest for Truth ; and
- (3) the realisation of Love.

Protection of the rights of others means service, by which one becomes free from one's debt to society, and by which—as a by-product, not for any egoistic gratification—one is instrumental in making for the true progress of the world and leaving it better than what it was when one entered it. Our debt to society is manifold. We are indebted to our parents and teachers as well as to many other agencies for our upbringing. The very roads on which we walk are not constructed by our kinsmen ; the houses we live in, the food that we eat, the many conveniences we enjoy, etc., are all gifts of society to us. We have to repay these debts to society by selfless service. Selfless service dissolves selfishness in man.

The quest for Truth or the yearning for Love results in release from the bondage of desires, and the attainment of Life and Love Immortal.

The fruit of discharge of one's duties is not the enjoyment of transient happiness—even of heaven—but release from the bondage of pleasure and pain and the attainment of Eternal Life and Love. Pleasure and pain are given even to the sub-human creation. Man

has the privilege of making right use of pleasure and pain, in the light of *viveka*, to rise above them.

A life enlightened by *viveka* is a dutiful life, for the light of *viveka* is given to man to illumine his path of duty.

Duty well done makes for *nivritti* from unessential *sankalpas* and fulfilment of essential *sankalpas*; which transforms *bhoga* into *yoga*.

Duty teaches us to make right use of our environment and to cease to brood over things, objects and environment not given to us. In fact, the unfailing watch-word of dutifulness is right use of the power and respect for the light of *viveka* given to one.

A *sadhaka* should remain wary in his doings; but happy in whatever happens, which is Divine dispensation. To be wary in doing means that in whatever we do, we should reflect over three things: (i) what for are we doing it? (ii) with what motive and feeling are we doing it? and (iii) how are we doing it? What happens is destiny or Divine dispensation. We should not sully our minds by expecting fruits of action according to the dispensation of our limited minds! Whatever we do in expectation of any desired results, is

prompted by selfishness or the desire for indulgence, and must result in sorrow. Desire for fruits of action is a symptom of attachment, which should have no place in the life of a *sadhaka*. For a *sadhaka* the discharge of duty is itself the richest fruit of action for it releases one from the shackles of doership. The *sadhaka* should reflect that when he does all that he can, will not the Divine do what is best for him? Desire for the fruit of action denotes lack of faith in the unquestioned Master of all actions, which is an affront to the Divine.

When all our *pravrittis* are motivated by pure feelings and with the right goal in view, and are carried out with efficiency, that means we are proceeding towards *nivritti*—leading unto desirelessness and the splitting of the ego. By acting in this manner and remaining happy in whatever happens, we obtain an understanding of the Divine Plan and a foretaste of Divine Beauty.

Only a dutiful life is the life for a *sadhaka*. Right thought and right action are the essence of one's duties. By right thought and right action only we can unwind wrong thought and wrong action and achieve the state of pure action.

· Lastly, right action is attained automatically by one who performs all action in the service of others; who never seeks or expects happiness born of the unhappiness of others; who indeed welcomes and feels happy in any suffering caused by the happiness of others. Any happiness born of the unhappiness of others turns into unhappiness to oneself; and any suffering which is born of the happiness of others turns into *ananda* to oneself. The rules of right action, therefore, prohibit indulgence in any happiness in which is ingrained the unhappiness of others, but encourage willing acceptance of any suffering in which is ingrained the happiness of others.

CHAPTER IV

ENVIRONMENT—OBJECTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

A GRAVE mistake which many *sadhakas* make is to think that the environment in which they happen to be placed is an obstacle to their *sadhana*. Circumstances and objects only appear to be relatively good or bad ; in reality all of them are basically imperfect. They do *not* constitute his life ; but are only tools of his *sadhana*. The law of Nature is composed only of love and justice. It is the supreme friend, philosopher and guide to man. The pleasure or pain which is experienced by man is not a final reward or punishment by Nature. The proper use of both pain and pleasure makes for progress. The *sadhaka* should neither regard his circumstances as his masters nor as his foes, but only as his instruments. Circumstances and objects sting only those who enjoy them ; they become servants to those who utilise them, such as they are, in the service of God. The thoughtless man

indulges in the enjoyment of pleasure and smarts under the fear of pain. The devotee or the seeker, instead of indulging in pleasures, distributes them in the service of others, while he learns the lesson of renunciation from pain. The man attached to the body and the world, even if he renounces something, does so to gain better things and circumstances thereby. But just as $\frac{3}{4}$ remains $\frac{3}{4}$ even if raised to $\frac{75}{100}$, even so no multiplication of things and more things gives him true happiness or peace; they only consume man the more in the fire either of pride or of want. Non-identification with objects and circumstances alone helps man to rise above them. The true *sadhaka*, instead of trying to alter circumstances and objects, always seeks to rise above them. Thus, by the right use of objects and circumstances—service of others through what appears pleasant and good, and renunciation of what appears bad and painful—the *sadhaka* marches forward to the same goal as the *jigyasu* attains through deep thought, the *yogi* through *yoga* and the devotee through devotion.

The *sadhaka* who wants God must sever his illusory relations with objects and circumstances. The slave of objects and circumstances

can never be a lover of God and a lover of God can never be a slave of objects and circumstances.

One can never rise above objects and circumstances by merely coveting to transform them into better objects and better circumstances. One can only rise above them by proper use of them, such as they are, in the service of God.

Objects and circumstances are only bubbles on the ocean of life. To regard them as life is the height of indiscrimination.

The right use of pleasure is service, and the right use of pain is detachment or renunciation. The right use of objects and circumstances is the starting-point of *sadhana*. That can only come when the *sadhaka* realises that pleasure and pain—which are all that objects and circumstances can give—are only the tools of his *sadhana* and have nothing to do with his real life. Pleasure and pain are things of the animal world. Man is born to rise above them to Life Eternal.

The discharge of one's duties is not dependent on favourable circumstances. The test of dutifulness is that it is unaffected by unfavourable circumstances. For example, any husband would love a beautiful wife, and any woman a husband endowed with wealth and health;

but love and duty would vindicate themselves in spite of the lack of these things.

The right use of favourable circumstances is to make ourselves generous to all, and the right use of unfavourable circumstances is to awaken ourselves to the illusoriness of the same, leading to true renunciation.

The Power that looks after the whole Universe is surely looking after the *sadhaka* also, and giving him all necessary material for *sadhana*. We have only to take everything given to us as a means or tool of *sadhana*. The *sadhaka* must not waste his breath or time in quarrelling about the tools of his work.

The intellect should be utilised in the quest of Truth, instead of in endless argumentations. Power should be used to relieve the suffering of others, rather than in self-indulgence. Time should be utilised in contemplation of the Divine, instead of day-dreaming in search of fleeting pleasures.

To evaluate oneself on the basis of one's circumstances and environment is a false standard, for circumstances and environment are tools of *sadhana* and do not constitute one's life.

Unfavourable circumstances may be an obstacle to self-indulgence, but they are never

an obstacle in the way of *yoga*. If worldly objects were to give peace of mind, we have only to check up how many people who have lots of things and possessions really enjoy peace.

Objects and circumstances can never be favourable in all respects, under the Divine plan. For if they were favourable in all respects, it would lead to the inertness of man, since the fulfilment of the *sankalpas* would then remain his sole aim, for which the value would remain only of objects and things, not of the man ; of matter, not of the spirit.

The *sadhaka* should remember two things. First, that he should do whatever he can do and not worry about what he cannot do ; second, that he must never rest contented without doing what he can do. The darkest hour of a *sadhaka's* life is one in which he does not do what he can do, and has not the 'divine discontent' for doing what he can do.

The Divine always gives the power and the strength to a *sadhaka* who makes proper use of the power and strength already given to him. However powerless we might be, when we dedicate ourselves to righteous performance of duty, power will flow into us, things will come to us. If we do not get more power and

more things it is because we have not utilised properly what is given to us. The Lord of power is always looking out for those who make right use of the power given to them to give more and more power. Divine Grace descends even on a man who, laden with sorrow for not doing what he can, surrenders himself to the Grace.

A wonderful feature of *sadhana* is that, whether the *sadhana* be based on the tiniest power and strength of the *sadhaka*, or on ample power and strength, the result is the same. Divine Grace is not to the measure of the magnitude or the amplitude of the *sadhana*, but of the single-mindedness of the *sadhaka*.

Renunciation of thought about unattained objects and circumstances leads to the proper use of the existing objects and circumstances.

No circumstances can be perfect; and since everything is in a state of perpetual flux, no circumstances can yield to permanent possession by anyone. Therefore circumstances can only be a means of *sadhana*; they are never one's life. To regard them as life is like building castles on ever-shifting sand. The right use of circumstances enables one to rise above the realm of the objective world to deeper and

truer levels of consciousness: self-realisation, awareness, life divine.

Innumerable problems beset the realm of the objective world, which is the realm of the mind. They can never be solved on that plane, or by the mind. They can only be dissolved by rising above that plane, and by *viveka*: the supra-mental light that illumines the mind. Indulgence in the world of objects for their own sake only involves us in their whirlpool, nourishes the ego, entangles us in the vicious circle of *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*, with the result of an unbreaking chain of pleasure and pain!

As the seed, the tree and the fruit are one in their substratum, but different in their manifestation, so the actor, the action and the fruit of action are one in substratum but different in their manifestation. The right use of objects and circumstances elevates the doer into the *sadhaka*, action into *sadhana* and the fruit of action into *sadhya*. The same unity in substratum which exists in the actor, the action and the fruit of action exists in the *sadhaka*, the *sadhana* and the *sadhya*; the lover, love and the Beloved; the seeker, the quest and *gnana*; the server, service and the served.

CHAPTER V

SERVICE

WHAT wealth is to the merchant, service is to the server. As light emanates from the sun and fragrance from the flower, so does service from the servant of God. Pure service is not *done* by the individual, rather it flows through the individual. Only he can be a channel of true service who does not run after objects, personal achievements or a favourable environment for his own happiness.

The world loves the true servant of man—who does not covet anything of the world—and still the whole world's love does not bind him. The man of egoistic action pretends to love the world, but really covets the love of the world, which however eludes him.

The mind of the true servant always flows towards the object of service without effort—pure and uncontaminated by any trace of selfishness. Every action in the conduct of the true servant is perfect, for every *pravritti*

of his has the same inner significance. Differences in the nature and size of his actions make no difference to the love permeating them and to the goal of his life. Environment, like the scenes of a drama, has no effect on his inner being. The *nivritti* which the *yogi* attains by *yoga*, and the intellectual seeker by deep thinking, the true servant attains by right conduct in whatever conditions appear before him; for he is not attached to appearances or to particular forms of action.

As wood goes on turning into fire as the fire flames forth, even so, as the ideal of service consumes a man, the entity of the servant becomes one with the object of service.

The true servant is never tired, for the Lord who is the source of all energy dwells in the heart of the servant. "He who adopts the programme of God commands the resources of God."

There are two types of servers—those who flow like the Ganges in the sight of humanity, and those others who stand motionless behind the scene like the Himalayas but secretly feed all the rivers. The truest service of fellow-beings is the kindling of *viveka* in them with the flame of *viveka* in us, even as a candle lights another.

It is a superstition to think that only a man of many external possessions can render service. Many people take service to be just some good and helpful deeds, which we perform in varying measures—largely from what we can easily spare of our time, energy or money. That is good so far as it goes, for every good deed brings its reward just as every evil deed does. But for the true spiritual aspirant service is a ritual of life which culminates in union with the Divine; his whole life has to be lived for the sole purpose of service to fellow-beings, as an offering to the Divine.

Only he can be a true servant whose heart vibrates with pain for the pain of others, and who, for his own happiness, looks up to God alone and never to the world. Good deeds prepare a man for such renunciation, but only a complete psychological renunciation of desires makes a man capable of being a true servant and channel of the Divine. If external possessions happen to be needed for a particular man to be necessary for service, God provides them.

True service is impossible without feeling the sorrow and suffering of another as one's own and one's own happiness or pleasure as the property of those in sorrow. But by taking on

oneself the sorrow of another, one gets rid of one's own sorrow once for all. To impose one's wisdom on another considering him to be ignorant, is not service. Therefore, till you are eligible to be a real server, at least do not be irreverent to others in thought, word or deed, and do not wish ill to anyone. That by itself is no mean service, which requires no outer resources.

✓ To serve is a high spiritual *sadhana*, but not to serve with a hidden desire to be regarded as a servant or saviour.

Just as any obstacle in the way of a flowing river accentuates the velocity of the flow, even so unfavourable circumstances in the way of a servant only accelerate the momentum of his service. Thus, unfavourable circumstances advance, and not retard, the progress of the *sadhaka*. What is given to us, including our environment, is but the material for *sadhana* given by God.

All actions of the Divine servant arise from and merge into feeling, and feeling merges into *gnana*. True service leads to freedom, for the true servant does not run after the world but the world runs after him; the true servant does not run after organisation but organisation follows him.

There is no room in the mind of a true servant for either an inferiority or a superiority complex.

The true servant will never indulge in any pleasure which is born of the pain of another, for it is bound to recoil on him according to the universal law.

The true servant makes no difference between a small piece of work and a so-called big piece of work, for all work is the Lord's. It is the egoist who makes such difference for his own glorification. All service is bound to be limited at the level of action, but the least of service is unlimited at the level of love which motivates it. The tiniest bit of pure service, therefore, yields the same result as a big act of service in uniting one with the served.

The privilege of true service is given by God in His Grace. Anyone who looks at the world for his own happiness cannot be a true server. Renunciation of the self is a pre-requisite for one who takes to the path of service. Of course, when even the earthly master, who has his limitations and is not unselfish, gives his best to his servant, would the great Master whose love and power are infinite and who is in no want for Himself, keep from looking

after one who does all work as unto Him and for His pleasure, by serving His creation ?

The true servant never looks at the faults of others. If others had no fault, there would be no need for his service. On the contrary, a servant of God is always busy removing his own faults so as to be a purer channel of service.

The servant of God does not regard his body or his mind or any external possessions as his own ; but he offers them to God in His service. God purifies the most contaminated instruments, once they are sincerely offered to Him.

Ordinary action—even good deeds—feeds the ego ; service dissolves the ego and awakens the real Self. Service is the medicine to cure the disease of disservice or self-indulgence. Medicine is of no further purpose beyond curing the disease. The perfection of service and goodwill is in melting the same in the realisation of the Self. Service is the external form of life ; the inner form is the *nirvikalpa* state.

The ego, with its body-consciousness, takes a man along the dark path of mortality, while the awakening of the soul takes the man along the path of immortality. The greatest service egoistically performed is not equal to the simplest service rendered egolessly ; for the

former humiliates its doer in expectation of the fruit of his action, whereas the latter being an offering to the Divine is pure, complete action. The former leaves lots of *samskaras* on the mind, whereas the latter leaves no trace of any *samskara* but engenders passionlessness and love.

Saints and sages have never proclaimed their service; but even though many of them may not appear to serve in the ways of men, who dare say that Kabir, Nanak, Meera, Surdas and Tulsidas¹ have not blazed trails of perpetual service to mankind?

The Divine never expects you to do what is beyond your power to do. Your field of duty lies only in what you can do.

Many men get so involved in outer action that the feeling behind it dries up. Such action loses its potency to lead to the true destination.

As the flower emanates sweet fragrance by itself, even so does the loving soul saturate all living beings. Service flows from the true server to all alike who come his way. He who limits himself to a certain creed, caste or country to the exclusion of others shuts himself out from the Infinite.

¹ Well-known Indian saints.

A useful principle for one who embarks on the path of service is never to start a *pravritti* which does not do any good or provide happiness to others. Even if one has thereby to remain actionless for some time, Providence will in due course give him the necessary *shakti* to release beneficent action.

If any happiness comes to the server, he distributes it among the unhappy on behalf of the Supreme Giver. Beneficent *pravritti* and desireless *nivritti* are the roots of *sadhana*.

The body and all other instruments of the server are never slow to be utilised in the service of others, but they are always slow to move in any action which does no good to anyone.

The acid test of pure action is that it leaves no trace of any *samskara* on the mind.

All human relationships are for service only, otherwise they are illusory. When you have rendered unto the world what belongs to it you will be detached from the body and its relationships and will commune with the Divine.

The heart in which love and compassion for all living beings reside can have no room for seeking after personal pleasures.

Let not a server fancy for a moment that he is obliging the served. After all, whatever a

man has with which he serves is derived from others, *e.g.*, eyes see by the dispensation of light, ears hear by the dispensation of air, tongue bears its taste from the dispensation of water, and the various elements which sustain his life are derived from the dispensation of trees and animals. Man is indebted to society in various ways—he is brought up by his parents and his relatives, educated at the expense of others, the roads he walks on were not constructed by himself or his family, and so on. Thus, our whole life is dependent on others. We only repay a part of the debt we owe to others by our humble service. True service is, therefore, rendered only in humility. There is no room for pride in service. In fact, when the whole world is powerless entirely to mitigate the sorrow of a single individual, how much less can a single individual mitigate the entire sorrow of the world! Indeed, service purifies one's own heart even more than it does lasting good to another. The honest server should feel indebted to the served. Humility and egolessness in service automatically result in renunciation and unite the server with the Beloved whom he serves, for the pure server follows up each thought and each act of service by true renunciation and

renunciation by pure love and awareness. But the server should serve without any label, the renouncer should renounce without a label and the devotee should love without a label.

Pure service is its own reward. It is no investment or barter. If we desire anything for ourselves through service, it is the worst form of impurity of mind in the garb of service. Service and renunciation are only the returning of whatever belongs to another, and therefore these should be done for their own sake; when these are done to achieve any ends they amount to their own denial.

For the spiritual *sadhaka* all acts of service resolve themselves into worship of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

HUMANITY today is confronted by a clash of two different currents of thought, even though their hidden aim is the same. One current of thought would turn one's back on society and seek one's salvation through a solitary life. The other, regardless of one's own psychological apparatus, seeks to improve society. Wisdom lies in harmonising the two approaches. This is possible only when the individual builds his life on the bed-rock of faith in God or Truth and in the spiritual unity of man.

Just as beautiful flowers make a beautiful garden, so only can society be made good and beautiful by good individuals composing it.

Exploitation, which is prevailing in the world in so many forms—visible and invisible—will not cease till the individual is purified in the fire of *viveka*. Only thus purified, will he be eager to do to others what he expects others to do to him.

Only one who is instilled with love can do any good to society. Happiness resides only in a heart charged with love and forgiveness; and only one who is happy himself can impart happiness to others.

Love and happiness cannot flower in a disintegrated personality. True integration of man's personality is not possible without control of the senses, without transmutation of selfishness into service, and of fissiparous thoughts into contemplation of God or yearning for Truth.

Gratification of the senses leads to fleeting pleasures, and control of the senses to happiness eternal.

Selfishness can be transmuted into selflessness only through service. To offer what one has to those who need it is service. Attachment to pleasures of the senses cannot be eradicated without service.

The rights of one constitute the duties of another. But to regard another's duty as one's right results in whetting one's appetite for rights, which intensifies one's desire-nature and provokes discontent and anger. Discontent and anger result in impurity of the heart and blurring of the sense of discrimination which give birth to many sins and retard spiritual

progress. On the other hand, for each to regard the other's rights as one's duties makes one duty-minded and makes for one's spiritual progress, as well as protects the rights of *all*. Duty-consciousness leads to the beautification of society, for duty well discharged purifies the individual and through him beautifies society.

The pure of heart *know* the fact of human unity. Many who do not know are impelled to believe in the brotherhood of man; for the brotherhood of man is a necessary corollary of the Fatherhood of God. To behave like brothers is a necessary *sadhana* for realisation of the truth of man's oneness in the Divine. Brotherly behaviour is the keynote of *sadhana* in human relationships. True love transcends outer differences and liquidates selfishness as well as indulgence in gratification of the senses. This purifies the heart. A pure heart reflects Truth.

Everyone is endowed with creative energy. But few utilise it in the service of others, which would release deeper human values and lead to true human progress. On the other hand, by utilising it for gratification of his senses, man sinks deeper and deeper into the mire of unawareness of his higher Self. The guiding principle should be to share with

others, in increasing measure, whatever one is blessed with, overriding any narrow limitations of family, caste, creed or race.

The simplest formula of right social values is to value commodities more than money, men more than commodities, conscience more than personalities, and Truth above all.

What is the real content of a good social order? It is that wherein there is no exploitation of one by another. Some people hold a good social order to mean a provision of good houses, good roads, good parks and so on. These, however, are but external paraphernalia. The fundamental basis of a good social order consists in no one being deprived of one's rights. Ask anyone what he conceives to be the criteria of a good household; and he would say a good household is one in which each person's rights are protected: where the elders protect the rights of the children and *vice versa*, husband those of the wife and wife those of the husband, and so on. Similarly a good society is one where each lives to uphold the rights of the other.

Some hold a good social order to be one in which there is maximum equality. Equality, however, there can never be in the forms or functions of all. Such equality would only

block progress. Just as in the human organism the functions and capacities of the different organs are different, so in human society. What is wanted is unity of purpose and mutual love in spite of differences of environment and functions. The very basis of human relationships is a meeting of persons and interests which are *complementary* to each other. A good house would not consist of all rooms that are alike—the kitchen, the bed-room, the drawing-room, etc.—but it is one in which each part is good in its proper place.

In a good social order, our rights would be met by the duties of the others and others' rights would be covered by our duties. Our rights would be safeguarded only when others are duty-conscious, and the rights of others would be safeguarded only when we are devoted to discharging our duty. A question may arise, how to make others devoted to their duties. The answer is, the only way to do so is ourselves to be devoted to duty. It is futile for us to be blaming one another for our plight. It only makes a vicious circle. And while we may be dependent on others for the protection of our rights, we are quite independent in fulfilling our obligations in the protection of others' rights. Only when each individual

engages himself in the protection of others' rights, will a righteous social order emerge.

It is futile to fancy that a good social pattern by itself would give birth to good individuals. On the contrary, good individuals only can give birth to a good social order. A good social order, in turn, would *help* the emergence of the good individual by providing the right environment. And that is its sole purpose. Verily, the world is like a school. The school is enriched by the quality of the alumni passing through it; and a school thus enriched is the better equipped to promote the well-being and progress of its pupils. But the central figure of the school is its pupils, in whom consists its sole purpose and basis of existence.

Without loving and peaceful individuals there can never be a loving and peaceful social order. Such social order cannot be created by legislation or a mere change of system. Mere legislation creates more problems than it solves; and hence it goes on multiplying itself without end. True reform can take place only in the hearts of men.

An equitable distribution of wealth too may improve one part of the environment, but it cannot by itself produce the right type of

individual. Without the right type of individuals mere economic prosperity is not of much value in the scale of truly *human* values. Economic prosperity devoid of *dharma* would be of as little value as the healthy physique of a lunatic! For man lives not by bread alone. Things, and more things, can never make for the essential basis of human relationships; soul, more soul, is the panacea for the sores of present-day humanity.

The reformer, the leader, the administrator will achieve lasting results only in proportion to the extent that he leads, reforms and administers himself first. Spiritual enlightenment spreads in society from spiritually enlightened individuals. Purity in social life is not possible unless the individuals are pure of heart. Corrupt individuals make a corrupt society. A disciplined nation can never emerge from undisciplined individuals.

As desires of individuals run riot, they react on one another and therefore on society with all the competition and conflict that desire breeds. Greed, anger and hatred are offsprings of desire; and mankind can never have peace so long as the hearts of men shoot forth greed, anger and hatred. The subtle bodies of such men are perpetually at war even more than

what is reflected on the physical plane. Indeed, the sorrow in the individual's heart reflects itself in the sorrow of the world, and *vice versa*; and the individual problem is the world problem.

Desireless individuals alone can rid society of all its maladies. Only as a progressive number of individuals shed their tumultuous desires, resentment and greed, will society attain a growing degree of harmony and happiness.

A social order which allows one section of the people to thrive on the degradation of the other is self-doomed; for where the prosperity of one is derived from the misery of another, such prosperity is bound to end in misery. Only where a man's well-being is linked with the well-being of others, is his well-being a blessing to him as well as to society. Men have to realise their mutual interdependence as a hard fact of their being. Man's various stations in life, including his talents and circumstances, are derived from the Cosmos and are meant for the service of the Cosmos. It is because he misappropriates these as his that the labourer thinks he should get the whole fruit of his labour; the capitalist thinks he should get the entire fruit of his capital; the ruler thinks he should get the whole fruit

of his power, and even the man of knowledge has begun to think that he should get the whole fruit of his talents. But, in truth, all the resources of man are Nature's, and are meant for the benefit of all living beings, and not only of those who merely use them—not to say of those who suppose they own them. For example, the land does not belong exclusively to the tiller of the soil; the children, the old, the sick, etc., are equally entitled to the fruits of the same. And so on. The same with nations and countries; for the universal brotherhood of man is a *fact* in Nature and not a wishful thought of the idealist. Indeed, the hard fact of "One World" is knocking into our heads from all sides in the present age. Man thought he could afford to toy with religion. But science has appeared on the scene—speaking the language which men shall understand—and released technological and economic forces which challenge humanity to live together as members of one human family or to perish.

Indeed, the multifarious social and political problems which beset us and persist in this age are due to the fact that we do not approach them with a pure heart and with righteous means.

When the leaders and men of learning of a nation fall a prey to selfishness, the nation is destroyed. Unless the leaders and men of learning of a nation acquire true discrimination and desirelessness, the nation and its people cannot make true progress. The true progress of society will be possible only in the measure in which society is inspired and led by persons of discrimination and desireless souls. The *guru* seeks to reform the world through knowledge, the leader through laws, the administrator through power. If we wish to be among these, we have to reform ourselves first by being our own *gurus*, *i.e.*, conducting our own lives in the light of *viveka*; by being our own leaders, *i.e.*, building our character; by being our own administrators, *i.e.*, controlling our mind and senses. Only he who has done this can be a true *guru*, a true leader and a true administrator of the world.

Dharma can only be propagated by men who lead a life of *dharma*, not by men who lead a life of *adharma* but talk of *dharma*. *Dharma* cannot be taught through talks; it can only be taught by men whose lives 'drip' *dharma*.

The best and the most altruistic materialist considers the giving of more to and taking less from the world as the height of altruism;

but for the spiritual *sadhaka*, altruism consists of giving away everything and one's all. Only such people can be the real leaders of men and real lawgivers. Laws made by desireless souls and governments composed of selfless servants of the people only can establish a society blessed with love, justice and peace. Spiritual leaders of men, while raising the standards of life and happiness of the people, are pointers to the life beyond; whereas leaders who are materialists only, in spite of their promoting means of richer living, create psychological complexes that cause misery to man.

CHAPTER VII

SELF-PURIFICATION—SANKALPAS AND VIKALPAS

ONE may not be aware of a pure mind, but everyone is aware of the impurities of the mind. Were it not so, the question of purification of the mind would not arise. When we are not able to keep our minds under our control, we naturally become aware of the faults of the mind.

If we examine the impurities of the mind, we shall discover that the impurity of the mind consists in something unnatural or extraneous creeping into the mind. The *sadhaka* has to examine what extraneous element has infected the mind. He will find that the impurity consists in the rise of *sankalpas* and *vikalpas*. Should one be able to have a foretaste of, or faith in, life beneath all *sankalpas* and *vikalpas*—from which they emerge and into which they merge—one would easily be relieved of them. On the other hand,

we believe the round of *sankalpas* and *vikalpas* itself to be life.

Experience teaches us that the gratification derived from the fulfilment of *sankalpas* is momentary, for it gives birth to fresh *sankalpas*. We remain immersed in the momentary gratification of *sankalpas* and the pangs of their non-fulfilment, which make a vicious circle.

The *sadhaka* should not get frightened of this vicious circle or curse his mind; for the mind is only our servant and reflects what we will or desire. To get frightened of our own creation and to behave as if we were its creatures only perpetuates our slavery. In fact, the mind is perpetually restless because the poor mind does not get its own fulfilment without peace. It is, therefore, only a pointer to our goal—peace.

All *sankalpas* arise from our investing outer things with faith, beauty and pleasure; which is the result of our false assumption that we are the bodies. In fact, the body and the mind are also objects external to our real selves. Ultimately *sankalpas* and *vikalpas* can only end when, through *viveka*, we cease to identify ourselves with our bodies and minds. Everything which derives life and light from

elsewhere is merely a fleeting phenomenon, and the body and the mind come under this very category.

The mind can never be impure in its entirety. Were it so, the question of purification of the mind could not have arisen. This shows that the impurity perceived in the mind is only in a part thereof. The other part which perceives this impurity is the light or the source of knowledge which also contains within itself the power to remove the impurity. This comes of the very process of investigation into the cause of the impurity of the mind. In fact, the very yearning to purify the mind releases the power to purify it.

The *sadhaka* should reflect deeply how this repetition of *sankalpas* makes him a slave to fleeting external objects and circumstances. In fact, the pain of non-fulfilment of *sankalpas* should give birth to deep thought and lead the *sadhaka* to rise above the mirage of *sankalpas*; but indulgence in the momentary pleasure of gratification of *sankalpas* subjects him to a vicious circle. When a *sankalpa* is fulfilled one should treat it as a moment of relief and rest, and not of indulgence. That is the real import of the fulfilment of *sankalpa* in the life of the *sadhaka*, just as the significance of its

non-fulfilment lies in arousing in him true quest or yearning for Truth or the Divine.

All *sankalpas* which only lead to desire for something unobtained are evil *sankalpas*. The renunciation of evil or impure *sankalpas* itself leads to the fulfilment of good *sankalpas*, and the fulfilment of good *sankalpas* leads to renunciation of the fleeting and attainment of true life. Renunciation of impure *sankalpas* is the means of purifying the mind.

Good *sankalpas* are those whose fulfilment is within one's power, which relate to the present, without the fulfilment of which one cannot remain and whose fulfilment does not involve injury to another. The fulfilment of such *sankalpas* causes detachment and liberates one from evil *sankalpas*.

✓ The *sadhaka* should realise that impurities of the mind and evil *sankalpas* come up on the surface only to be washed out. Thus the knowledge of the impurities and distractions of the mind should be treated by the *sadhaka* as an aid to self-purification and not as an obstacle.

Just as we observe plants growing upon the earth and dying out—or flowers blossoming and fading away—even so we should observe the multifarious *sankalpas* rising in our mind and subsiding again and again. Such *sankalpas*

as we cannot keep from fulfilling, which relate to the present and whose fulfilment does not involve injury to another may be fulfilled. That will help to starve out wrong *sankalpas*.

A pose of peace, with *vikalpas* concealed inside, covers up and maintains for long the impurities of the mind. The mind of man achieves rest by the cessation of *sankalpas* and *vikalpas*; by common practices the latter are only suppressed. Man becomes *nirvikalpa* only when he ceases to derive pleasure from the fulfilment of *sankalpa* and sorrow from the non-fulfilment of *sankalpa*.

Attraction and repulsion of the mind are an index to its impurity. They arise in the mind of one who has not realised real life but identifies oneself with the body and its extension—the world.

The impurity of the mind consists in the conflict between the impact of *viveka* and the impact of the sense-organs thereon. As *viveka* consumes the desires of the senses, the mind gets purified by itself.

Fear and greed are symptoms of an impure mind.

All *sadhanas* bear full and rich fruit in the soil of a pure mind. Any *sadhana* done by force with an impure mind only causes false

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Fear and greed are symptoms of an impure mind.

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pride. The mind cannot be purified by suppression.

The quest for Truth, yearning for the Divine and the discharge of one's duties with one's whole mind are powerful aids to the purification of the mind.

One means of purifying the mind is to dissociate oneself from the mind. Dissociation is not violent or hateful. It is to be a beholder of something outside our real self, and thus to starve it of the food of associating ourselves with it.

Self-surrender to Divine Grace is the best and most potent weapon to end all the impurities of the mind.

Self-purification is an essential pre-requisite for self-realisation. As the removal of all exterior deposits from a piece of cloth means the cleaning of the cloth, so does the eradication of the hankering after and attachment to self-indulgence mean purification of the heart. Indeed, self-purification is the base of self-realisation. One whose mind is purified of all external *samskaras* effortlessly realises the *nirvikalpa* state. *Nirvikalpa* state is the natural fruit of self-purification, and in that state the organs of action act imperceptibly like a machine, without leaving any *samskaras*

on the mind. The purified self of the aspirant no more rushes outside for succour, but turns inwards in one-pointed aspiration and realises the Self by the very grace of the Self.

The pure mind is one that is completely freed from desire, and therefore enjoys freedom from thoughts between any two actions. That poise is a state of *yoga*.

When our feelings, actions and the goal differ from one another, it makes the mind impure. When they are harmonised, the mind is pure.

Pure awareness shines in the purified mind. The pure mind is a state wherein the clouds of desire and all that desire breeds are dissipated by the dawning of the Sun of the Self.

Yoga, *gnana* and love are not the products of any action or practice ; they come naturally to the aspirant whose mind is purified.

The mind of one who has not redeemed one's debts to all concerned has not yet earned its freedom. One must discharge one's obligations before one can attain pure mind. He who is still in the grip of a sense of his own rights is far from being pure of mind.

The masterkey for attaining purity of mind is dissociating oneself from body-consciousness, which is the root of all desires that pollute the mind.

Good conduct flows from a purified mind. One who merely practises external rules of good conduct is not the possessor of a pure mind. Consciousness of one's virtues and the tendency to pry into others' faults are enemies to pure mind.

Contemplation of past incidents, pleasant or unpleasant, and indulgence in hopes or fears of the future are symptoms of an impure mind.

Do not wish ill of anyone. Learn to forgive others. Forgiveness is a masterkey for the purification of one's mind. Forgiveness can only come in a person who renounces his claims and lives only to fulfil the claims of others. To ask for forgiveness and to forgive others, from the core of our hearts, is a great spiritual asset to purify the mind.

A pure mind is imbued with perfect equanimity. If your mind is attracted or repelled by any object, beware it is infested with lust or greed. If your mind reacts to the state of your body, beware it is the victim of attachment. If your mind is sensitive to what others speak of you or do to you, be sure it is an impure mind. If you feel conscious of any virtues in you, know that you are not virtuous.

CHAPTER VIII

THE 'I' OF THE SADHAKA

MEN generally treat *sadhana* as a part of their life. The thoughtful, however, treat their life itself as *sadhana*. Indeed, the life of man—being merely a bundle of desires and aspirations—is only a *sadhana* for eternal life. The superficial *sadhaka* regards his objective life alone as life, and adorns it by various so-called *sadhanas* even as a materialist, equating himself with the body, decorates it with various beauty aids. As all such decorations remain separate from the body, so all such *sadhanas* remain separate from life.

The difference between a man who makes *sadhana* only a part of his life and him who makes his life itself a *sadhana* is that the former fails to become one with the goal, while the latter never mistakes the wood for the trees.

The 'I' of the *sadhaka* who makes his life itself a *sadhana* is soon transformed into a

yearning for Truth or God—by whatever name one calls the Supreme Reality. In believing himself to be a servant of God, his whole life becomes an instrument in His service, and his mind and senses become willing tools. Unless a man becomes a servant of God through and through, his service would only be of the category of 'good deeds'. Similarly, unless one becomes a *jigyasu* through and through, one's search for Truth would merely remain an exercise of the intellect. Unless he becomes a devotee through and through, his contemplation of God would only be a prayer for various objects, never true *bhakti*. Therefore, true *sadhana* emerges from the whole 'I' of the *sadhaka*; it makes his whole life a *sadhana* and all his *pravritti* constitute only various forms of his *sadhana*. The devotee must become entirely His. Then he will not be bound by the various forms of *sadhana*; but his whole life—whatever he thinks, feels or does—will become *sadhana*. That alone can make for rapid progress towards the goal.

It should thus be clearly understood that, fundamentally, man does not really become good by doing good, but does good by being good. *Bhakti* flows from one who becomes a devotee, service from one who becomes a

servant of God and desirelessness comes of its own accord in the egoless. The entire life of such a one becomes a *sadhana*—instead of *sadhana* being only a part of one's life.

The source of man's action is feeling which is the motive-spring of the doer. That is to say, a man, actuated by certain feelings and motives, turns himself into some sort of entity, wherefrom his plans and actions come into play. The server feels himself to be a servant and then serves, and so on. The *sadhaka*, therefore, should first purify his own 'I', which is the source of action. When the source is purified, pure action flows therefrom. If the *sadhaka* believes himself to be a child or servant of God, only such actions and thoughts will flow from him as would please God. This makes for rapid purification of desires and actions. The actions of such a *sadhaka*, in due course, become like the actions of an actor on a stage, who plays his part but does not regard his part as his real life. Such actions do not deposit any *samskaras* on the mind of the *sadhaka*, and his mind remains uncontaminated.

The *sadhaka* alone is the true man, and the life of a *sadhaka* alone is the life worthy of a man; all that he thinks or feels or does must be a part of his *sadhana*. There is something

basically wrong with the *sadhaka* whose mind and senses do not co-operate with his *sadhana*. Such a man should pause to consider deeply what is the goal of his *sadhana*. The whole 'I' of a man hankering after wealth receives the co-operation of the mind; similarly the mind is bound to co-operate also with the *sadhaka* whose 'I' really craves for the Divine. In case the mind does not co-operate, it only means that its owner does not really want that for which he poses to be a *sadhaka*.

In the case of a man whose whole life is a *sadhana*, every action, thought and feeling is directed towards the goal.

Only a true *sadhaka*, i.e., one whose whole life becomes a *sadhana*, can do justice to his duties even to the world; for he desires nothing from the world for himself, but only repays his debt to the world by rendering every service to all alike who come his way.

Identification with the body causes various concepts, e.g., I belong to such and such a country, class or caste, creed, school of thought, position, family, etc. The man who identifies himself with the body remains engrossed only in seeking indulgence of the body; the man in whom is kindled the quest of Truth or Love Divine becomes a *sadhaka* who sheds his false

identifications through service and the power of *viveka*.

Body-consciousness means that, assuming ourselves as the body, we attach ourselves to objects, circumstances, individuals, etc. Subservience to objects gives birth to greed, subservience to individuals gives birth to attachment, subservience to environment leads to bondage. Freedom from body-consciousness means the realisation of oneself as separate from the body, the senses, the mind, the vital breath, etc. Thereby the being who has long regarded himself as a child to his parents, as father to his children, as brother to his sisters, as husband to his wife, as a neighbour to his neighbours, as a citizen to the State, as a follower of a certain religion or creed, etc., awakens, after due discharge of his past obligations, to his basic self on which all these phases were implanted. The discharge of his obligations means service of the world by rendering unto the world all that was the world's, and offering his heart, thus freed, to the Lord of the heart.

The limited 'I' is born of *aviveka* which leads to limited affections which cause unbrotherliness. Its limited utility is the perception it gives of love which expands as it grows.

He who cannot rise above the 'I' by deep thought or devotion should go on expanding his 'I' so as gradually to embrace the whole universe. To renounce all or to love all, paradoxical as it may seem, comes to the same thing. For the *sadhaka* who is still in mid-stream and questions whether to adopt the path of embracing all as one's own or of discarding all, the best course is to regard all as one's own to serve and to love, but not to regard anyone or anything as one's own for one's own fulfilment. Renunciation enables one to turn one's back to the fleeting, and love enables one to unite with the Eternal.

The 'I' of the *sadhaka* is indeed the *sadhana-tattwa*—the seed which sprouts as the tree of service, on which blossoms the fruit of renunciation, in which is contained the juice of Love Divine, which is the hidden want of men, the children of God. The *sadhaka* begins as a server, renounces as he advances and ends in unity with the Beloved. On the other hand the ego gives rise to the tree of delusion which produces the fruit of *moha*, in which is hidden the poison of sorrow and grief.

The aspirant should cease to believe himself to be a being who indulges in the pleasures of the senses, and should regard himself as a

sadhaka even though the desires of the senses still lurk in him as outgoing thieves. As so many seeds reside in the soil, so do desires of the senses reside in the indulgent; as all the seeds perish with the destruction of the soil, so do desires of the senses die of themselves when the enjoyer of the senses is replaced by the *sadhaka*. It is, therefore, of fundamental importance to the aspirant to assert his transformed 'I' in his thought and deed. In believing himself to be a *sadhaka*, one's whole life will naturally become a *sadhana*—instead of *sadhana* being a part of his life—for life unrolls before one in accord with what one takes oneself to be. Thus, everything that appears in the life of a *sadhaka* as a result of his past associations becomes for him a tool of his *sadhana*, for all his past assumed and fleeting identifications have got to disappear before he comes to be one with Truth.

Long enough have we fed ourselves on beliefs in passing phases: that we are children on the lap of the mother; that we are the youths or the maidens; that we are officials or businessmen or some other professionals or the like; that we are learned or philanthropic or men of so many qualities. But all these varied phases only went to create innumerable

sankalpas and *vikalpas*, whose vicious circle continued to feed our vanity or frustration by turns, and we remained chained to a life of abject servitude to a world of objects in perpetual flux! It is time we broke asunder the chains.

CHAPTER IX

EGOLESSNESS

A CRYSTAL-GAZE and introspection of life would reveal that there is nothing really ours in ourselves; but when we, out of ignorance, assume anything in ourselves as ours, we become limited. Limitation leads to all sorts of differences and misery. By holding our body, *prana*, sense-organs, mind, etc., as 'I' we subject ourselves to the feeling of death when these tools of ours inevitably perish. Nor do these—or any individual to whom we attach ourselves for that matter—gain anything by such attachment. When we detach ourselves from all these, then they too begin to thrive in freedom. Whatsoever we attach our 'I' to, becomes limited, and limitation makes a cesspool of the pure waters of love, breeding disease and death. Therefore, the primary task before a spiritual aspirant is to annihilate or melt one's ego by deep thinking or by deep yearning for the Divine respectively.

There is no *pravritti*, however dear, of which man does not feel weary at one stage or another. One loves to eat, but at some stage one feels surfeited. One loves to walk, but at some stage one desires to rest. One loves to see, but at some stage one desires to close one's eyes. One loves to hear, but at some stage one desires not to hear. Wealth appears attractive; but at some stage man says to it: "Now you remain in the safe; I should like to sleep now." At some stage the lover seeks separation from the beloved, the child from the mother and the mother from the child, friend from friend—all seeking separation for rest. This shows that man can never be satisfied for all time with any of the external things—reflections of the ego—which sooner or later drive him to *nivritti*.

Just as water's awareness of itself remains unaffected whether the ocean is calm or foaming in waves, so does one's awareness of the Self remain unaffected while the body and the mind automatically perform their functions. Work is not an obstacle to egoless living; what is an obstacle is thinking about it in terms of the past and the future and the desire for its fruits. The boat floats on water, but if it is filled with water it sinks.

Above all, if we examine deeply, we shall find that nothing in us which we regard as ours is really ours. The body is obviously a gift of the earth; the eyesight is a gift of the sun; the power of hearing is a gift of *akasha*; the mind is a tiny particle of the Cosmic Mind, and so on! These have got to be returned to their parent-stock. From those who regard these as their own, they are snatched, leaving sorrow in the mind of the misappropriator. On the other hand, the wise *sadhaka* who returns these to those whose gifts they are, through their service, finds himself released from their bondage and flies like a bird to his real Home. *Viveka* has released him from all false identifications with his body and mind, and taught him that all the parts played by him on the stage of changeful life were just parts played, and not his real life.

That what we consider as our power is not ours but that of the Infinite, is evident from our experience of exhaustion at each step, when the Infinite replenishes our strength, though concealing Itself and allowing us to assume it as our own. Such is His Love for and kinship with us, though we are ungrateful enough not once to turn our back on these gifts and look at the Giver. If only once we

would do it in the depth of our hearts, we would be rid of desires ; and the body and the mind which stand impure by our believing them to be ours will become purified, and be tools of service of the Cosmos. No true service of the world is possible without such self-purification. The limited ego is only a centre of assumed relationships, which has to be dissolved by discharging the duties arising from those relationships. When these are faithfully discharged, then only arises the true self-enquiry, ' Who am I ? '.

The hidden essence of the 'I' is indeed Truth, Goodness and Beauty. That is why, when we identify our 'I' with any object, body or mind, they appear to be good and beautiful. But in the very process, such assumed identification, with its limiting action, gives birth to desires and to impure *sankalpas*. The limited 'I', then, becomes a greater enemy to man than all the other adversaries put together. It is, therefore, essential for the spiritual aspirant to split the atom of the psyche, which is the ego ; for the Peace of God is a state not of the individual mind, but of a mind freed of individuality.

CHAPTER X

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

THE hope of pleasure and the fear of pain make the mind impure. Why do these arise in our minds? If we ponder deeply, we shall find that the major cause thereof is that we do not realise that the separateness and differences which appear to us in life are not real but illusory. They are not real because the body cannot be separated from the world, the individual from the society, the 'I' from the Infinite. Why then do separateness and differences appear to us, one may ask. They appear not because of any separateness or differences in the substratum; but because of differences of forms, functions, angles of vision, etc. Desire feeds these differences; but for the desireless these differences only become a *sadhana* for the realisation of the One.

A thorn pierces the foot and tears come into the eyes. Why? The foot is obviously different in form and appearance from the eye, and its functions and shape are also different from

those of the eyes. Tears come into the eyes because the one who holds the feet as his and the eyes as his, is the same. Thus, the visible differences between the eyes and the feet are not basic, but are only differences of form and function. Even so, the Cosmos which we see as full of different appearances has only one Lord—call Him Lord, or Light, the Knower or whatever you please according to your way of approach.

To take another example, some of us regard ourselves as men, citizens of the world; some think of ourselves as Indians; some as Beharis, Punjabis, Madrasis, etc.; some as belonging to a certain district or city or village. When called upon to discharge our functions for the city or village, we function as belonging to that city or village; when called upon to discharge our functions as citizens of our country, we function as citizens of the country; and so on. We are the same persons in spite of all these differences in functioning; and surely we are not limited by any of these functions. We remain associated with all and yet remain something more than all the functions which we perform in various capacities and various forms and at various levels.

Therefore, we should realise that the differences in functioning and forms are not of our real nature or true in themselves. If only the *sadhaka* truly understands his real nature as *jiva* he would give love to God; as an individual he would render service to society; and as one detached, he will be himself, pure and simple.

Therefore, our spheres of action and of thought are only resting places on the way to our Goal—which is one.

All pleasure and pain follow our limiting ourselves to forms and functions in which there can be attachments but not love. Love pertains to the substratum which is one and indivisible. Hope and fear, pleasure and pain can never exist in the One, they appear only at the levels of forms and function, which are mere waves on the surface of the Ocean that is one.

God's Universe is indeed one and indivisible; 'I' and 'mine' are but temporary formations in Nature which create the illusion of separateness. In truth the essence of the whole universe is one, the essence of the whole of life is one; but for want of *viveka* man sees differences between himself and the rest. Just as a conglomeration of many living cells makes the

body, so does the conglomeration of all that appears to exist makes the universe. That from which the universe originates, in which it has its being and in which it dissolves is the One. Even as in a glass all that is reflected is just a vision and not reality—nor does it affect the mirror—so the One is the only Reality; and all else that is superimposed on It is a fleeting appearance only. This, however, is experienced only with the dissolution of the 'I' of the *sadhaka* when the lover unites with the Beloved.

Behind all diversity, that which is the life behind all diversities and from which everything in diversity derives light, is the One. Diversity may lead to diverse ways and paths of action, but that does not affect the underlying unity of *swarupa*. Any differences in forms of manifestation do not affect it. The waves and the ocean, the being and the universe, the organ and the body are one, even as the shape, qualities and functions of the various organs of the body differ from one another, but the body itself manifesting these is one. Thus, in reality the world is fundamentally one, or, deeper still, is merely a state of the One. A state of being has no separate existence of its own but is merely a pointer to

the One whose state of being it is. The difference in qualities, beliefs and paths means only a difference of function or approach. The differences in belief and qualities determine the duties and functions of men, but do not demarcate them from one another. The realisation of the unity of *swarupa* and love leads to Immortality, power and joy. It is only when we get out of focus with the oneness of *swarupa* and impose illusory limitations by identifying ourselves with the limiting phases and functions, that we burn in the fire of difference and separation.

The 'I' in reality is nothing but a yearning of the wave for Mother Ocean, in which is its true home. Separated, it is nothing; in the bosom of its Mother it is everything. God is the Ocean, we are but waves small or great. The Power that dwells in the giant wave or in the small wave alike is not in the wave but in the ocean of which it is a wave. To know this is to discover the Infinite in the finite and thus to realise the Unity underlying all diversities.

CHAPTER XI

LIVING IN THE PRESENT

ONE of the major ironies of our living is that we seldom live in the present. If we reflect deeply, we would find that the dead weight of the past on the one hand and dreams of the future on the other completely overwhelm and suffocate the present in which we should live.

Indeed, the mystery of the present, which is life, remains hidden from us and our minds remain impure because we continuously feed on the shadows of the past and of the future. The atom of the psychic world remains wrapped in the coverings of the past and the future. The splitting of this atom would release Life and Love.

This may sound mystic and abstruse. But let the *sadhaka* ponder over it. Whatever we think about ourselves or about our course of action, we do it on the basis of the past or on the hopes of the future. We profess that our present situation is like this or that; but that

hardly relates to the present. Even when we show yearning for self-realisation in the present, there remains hidden in our thoughts the hope of self-realisation at some future time. Self-realisation, however, is an issue of the here-and-now; and whenever it comes, it will come by facing the present, never by indulging in thoughts of the past or of the future.

The *sadhaka*, therefore, should, in the deeper recesses of his heart, dissociate himself from, and turn his back on, all past incidents; and should not indulge in day-dreams of the future. He should live fully in the present. He should think over what his real want is, what he has in the present and what he is doing. A full awareness of any of these three things will result in an awareness of all the three.

What has one got in the present, and does it evoke his love? Or if it does not evoke his love, does he renounce it or not? The mind will be purified either way. But in most cases we neither love what appears to us as life, nor renounce it. We go on spurning what we have and desiring what we do not have. There are only two alternative courses before the *sadhaka*: either to make the best use of what he has of objects, talents and power—which should be enriched by being put to the best use—or to

detach himself completely from all these and abide in the peace of detachment. Either course will make the mind pure.

We evade sorrow by invoking pleasure. As a result, happiness continually evades us and an invocation of pleasures and indulgence therein releases fresh sorrow. If we face sorrow with our whole being, greet it as a messenger of Truth and pause to receive its message, it will depart, yielding place to *ananda*, whose message it brings in its own way but which we constantly spurn. The message of *ananda*, which is sought to be delivered by sorrow, its messenger, is that we must not be deceived by pleasures which masquerade as happiness but whose content is sorrow. The force of *ananda* constantly unmasks the deceit of fleeting pleasures and brings out and exposes them by bringing out sorrow in its nakedness. But few realise the hidden purpose and message of sorrow and we go on evading the same by invoking and indulging in fresh pleasures and sorrow anew. Pleasures continually disown us, but we never disown pleasures, even though each time we invoke pleasures sorrow appears. We know from experience that there is no pleasure without pain in its wake and yet we go on invoking pleasure. If only we face sorrow

without reserve and with love, that very moment it would tell us: "Now I go, never to return."

The way to face sorrow is to forget all about the past and about the future. Then you will make the best use of the present. If anything comes in your way, you will make the best use of it. If any individual engages your mind, you will then render whatever service you can to him and thereby be detached from him; and whatever be the circumstances, you will make the best use of them. By thus making the best use of the objects and circumstances which appear before you, you will be relieved of them and will be faced with the present: life and love. Life and love will first appear before you as a quest or a yearning. True quest for Truth and yearning for the Divine are not a matter of slow practice, but come of themselves in the very present the moment you have redeemed your debt to the fleeting by making the best use of it and by service. Quest and yearning are the surest path of realisation, for they are the reflections of a pure mind.

So, for the *sadhaka* the present is either a quest for the One or a yearning for the One, or the realisation of the One. Nothing fourth can really be a thing of the present. All else is an echo of the past or a fantasy of the

future—reflections of an impure mind. Yearning for the Divine is a matter of realisation of kinship with the Divine, not with objects or individuals.

Therefore, the *sadhaka* has to make the best use of objects and circumstances, or to dissociate from them. The former is meant to help the *sadhaka* at the level of action, and the latter at the level of knowledge. So, the *sadhaka* is either engaged in the service of others by making the best use of everything he has; or he abides in peace by rising above them. The former engenders love, the latter brings about unity. For the work of the former, because they are based on the relationship with the Lord of all work, dissolves in love by merging the worker in Him whose worship all his work becomes. Work is only a *sadhana*, not the goal.

The *sadhaka* should forget all past incidents and retain only the wisdom distilled out of the same. We generally keep the incidents stored in the mind, never pausing to distil the wisdom or experience therefrom, whereby the mind becomes impure. From this standpoint, constant thought of objects of desire is much worse than even their indulgence.

Live in the present only, therefore, and love it.

CHAPTER XII

VIRTUE AND VICE

If we reflect deeply, we shall see that true virtue is natural to man, while vice is unnatural. For instance, no one asks a person who speaks the truth, "Why do you speak the truth?". Only to a person who tells a lie one says, "Why do you tell a lie?".

Virtue is not acquired from outside. What remains after the renunciation of vice is virtue, in its natural, pristine state.

The body and the mind are only mechanisms of Nature which are given to man for his use. Man on account of indiscrimination identifies himself with them and takes upon himself the limitations of the same. Even virtues acquired under this wrong identification are only a snare; for an egoistic virtue is the seed of many a vice. But those who treat the body and the mind as a temporary loan from Nature are not involved in the limitations of the same.

To keep dwelling on one's faults beyond the time when the fault was committed, is an even greater fault than the original fault. The constant feeling 'I am a sinner' makes a vicious circle. 'I am a *sadhaka* aspiring for the sinless state' should be the right, positive attitude.

Attachment to external objects, lack of faith in Life Divine and *aviveka* give rise to all imaginable evils and vices.

When one feels detached from one's body and mind, all vices automatically wither up and cease to be.

The ending of a single vice in its entirety results in the ending of all vices. The attainment of a single virtue results in the attainment of all virtues.

Just as darkness lives on light, so vice derives its sustenance from some virtue. No one can be entirely evil.

Consciousness of one's virtues abides in those who, while powerless, do not recognise themselves to be so; or those who, endowed with a partial quality, feed their pride by looking into the shortcomings of others. The most sinful man can hope to get rid of his vices; but it is extremely hard for the person who is proud of his virtues to become truly virtuous or to attain freedom from vice.

The limitation of virtue is vice. Kindness to all is a virtue; but when that kindness is limited to a particular individual, sect or region, it becomes vice.

Want of light is darkness, but darkness has no separate existence of its own, even so the absence of virtue is vice, and vice has no independent existence of its own. The lack of *jnana* is *ajnana*, the lack of love is hatred, the lack of renunciation is attachment and the lack of generosity is greed.

Virtue and vice are not many; but one virtue or one vice appears in many forms and at various levels. Indeed, all virtues are embedded in *viveka*, and all vices are embedded in *aviveka*. The sun of *viveka* dispels the darkness of *aviveka*, and banishes vice.

Our deepest vices are those which are born of a consciousness of virtue. In the fullness of virtue there can be no consciousness of virtue. Consciousness of virtue comes only in a state of *partial* virtue. Partial virtue contains within it vice.

All virtues are embedded in the plenitude of love, and all vices in the want of love.

Any virtue which is transplanted on the 'I' or on which the 'I' is transplanted becomes a vice.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD

OUR limited speech cannot describe, and our limited faculty of seeing cannot behold, the transcendent glory of God. God Himself could hardly describe His real nature, for His organs of description would be limited as compared to Him. The Lord of Bliss is He from whom emanates, and into whom merges, all that goes by the name of bliss.

The *rasa* on tasting which all the various *rasas* become tasteless, the *rasa* which lends life to all the *rasas*, is the supreme *rasa*. Divine Love is that nectar which knows no decrease; and, however much you may drink thereof, you will never feel satiated with it.

He without whom none can live, and without whom all are imperfect, is the transcendent Lord.

The Lord is always the Whole—transcendent and immanent. He who, while manifesting Himself as a part, at once remains the whole, is God.

He alone sees who sees the Whole in each of the various parts. A part separating itself from the Whole can never know the Whole. Only on merging into the Whole can one realise the Whole. The man who chooses to remain separate from the Whole and still attempts to understand It only indulges in intellectual gymnastics. You may examine the part, but you can only discover the mystery of the part in the Whole. For, in reality, the part has no existence of its own. That from which the part has derived its existence is the Whole. When you realise that the part by itself is nought, you will become one with Him. When you become one with a thing, you cannot objectively describe it. The eye never sees itself.

The Divine has all the qualities which men attribute to Him according to their natures and wants; but He has not only those attributes and qualities but has an infinity of attributes and qualities. Every seed derives what it needs from the earth, the sun and the air; but it does not mean that it has known all that there is in the earth, in the sun and in the air.

If you want a *bhakta* to describe *Bhagavan*, his description can only take the shape of his

bhakti. That is to say, the *bhakti* of the *bhakta* is a translation in human terms of the nature of the Lord, which, however, cannot be described in words.

How long can you retain the faculty of speech and hearing? The moment you begin to describe the Lord, the speech will cease to be yours and the ears which hear will also cease to be yours. When the eye sees and yet does not see, when the ear hears and yet does not hear, when the tongue speaks and yet does not speak, then only they see, hear and speak of the Lord. The Lord can be understood only be realising Him. He cannot be understood in a state of separation. Cease to hear anything except about the glory of God, then God will Himself speak to you of Himself. But this will be only when your heart is burning with the longing to end your separation from Him.

If you are really yearning for the Lord, you will not enquire what is the nature of the Lord. Ponder over this deeply. A thirsty man never asks what is the nature of water. He is eager only to drink water. A hungry man never asks what is the nature of food. He is eager only to eat food. So I can only tell you that the nature of the Lord is such that without Him you are ever discontented

because in His nature is rooted your real want. When your petty worldly attachments—attachments for the body, wife, husband, children, wealth, fame, etc., leave you, your hidden want will blaze forth. The fire of your real want will burn the dross of your ignorance and unite you with the Beloved. Then the tongue will not speak and the ear will not hear, and yet you will but sing and hear of the glory of the Lord. Through such *bhaktas* the Lord ever sings His own glory. One separated from the Lord can never sing or hear of His glory.

By becoming a *bhakta*, even the greatest sinner will be transformed and be able to sing His glory. Wood that is thrown into the fire becomes one with and indistinguishable from the fire. Just as fire does not refuse to transform any piece of wood into fire, even so the Lord never refuses to take any soul unto Himself. This is the measure of the immeasurable love of God! Therefore, the only way to know His *swarupa* is to become His. This means complete self-surrender to Him. Without complete self-surrender, whatever you may say or do, however beautiful your words and holy your worship and rituals may appear to be, they will all be like lifeless machines which will not work. Thus, one can know God only by being

His *bhakta* and one can be a *bhakta* only by becoming His and His alone.

Most of us, however, pin our faith in God only to fulfil our earthly desires, and would be prepared to drop God altogether if only our desires could be fulfilled without Him. In truth, no one possesses or enjoys anything but as a gift from God. But the Supreme Giver gives us in so unknowable a manner, so generously and so selflessly that He does not reveal His Face to those whom He gives; and He gives even to those who do not believe in Him. For instance, He gives the power of speech even to the liar. He gives even to the worst misuser of His gifts. You may say that you have come into your possessions by such and such action. But who gave you the power to perform the action? You may say, your brain. But in what factory was that brain manufactured? Assuming that many a factory owed their establishment to your brain, who is the director of the factory which produced your brain? We offer our homage to those brains from which have come many precious works of philosophy, literature, art and science, but hardly pause to think of the source of the very brains from which have come out all the precious heritage of mankind.

The Divine, indeed, knows only to give ; He is Infinite, and not in want of anything so as to do anything else. He who gives us all these things, the very objects and minds that we consider as ours, is so unbounded in His love and compassion that He goes on giving them to us in spite of our ungratefully misappropriating them as ours. What is more, He sustains us, overlooking our faults, by His love ; tirelessly He goes on giving out of his Infinitude. Have we ever cared for once to turn our gaze away from all these objects and so-called dear ones to the Supreme Giver of these, Who alone knows how to give without a thought of return—return in any shape or form ?

CHAPTER XIV

SELF-SURRENDER— THE QUINTESSENCE OF DEVOTION

SELF-SURRENDER is the key to God-realisation : it is the strength of the weak, the life of the *sadhaka*, the final effort and the trump-card of the devotee, the sheet anchor of the theist, the unfailing medicine for the sorrow-stricken, the prayer of the fallen. Self-surrender gives strength to the weak, vouchsafes *siddhi* to the *sadhaka*, the Beloved to the lover, God to His devotee, happiness to the server, holiness to the sinner, freedom to the bound one, immortality to mortal man.

Every man surrenders himself to someone. The difference only is that the theist surrenders to the One and the materialist surrenders himself to many ; the former fulfils his real want and the latter runs after innumerable shadows of desires. Real want once fulfilled ceases to be, whereas desires arise again and again.

Self-surrender is an attitude of mind, which exalts the 'I' of the devotee. It is not any particular form of action. Nor is the feeling 'I am His' a matter of practice. It is a *bhava*. Once it is enthroned in the heart, it sprouts forth into all such *sadhana* or actions as necessary, even as a seed once sown sprouts into a tree in due course. Prior to self-surrender the 'I' of man remains a bundle of desires. Self-surrender dissolves all desires into one desire. Then the man who has surrendered himself to God may seem to others to be performing many actions; but they are only like the acting on a stage for the benefit of the world. His inner life is one-pointed.

No one is too low to be accepted by the Lord. No mother, even in our world, denies her uncleanest child her love. Surely if we rush into the Lord's bosom as His children, He will not refuse to own us. The greatest mistake we commit is that, on the path to the Lord, we create so many hillocks of desire on which we pause to rest, even though if we have once surrendered ourselves, the Lord comes more than half-way to blast those hurdles with His Grace. The Grace of the Lord is not less than the might of the Ganges which washes off all the dirt in its way.

If you surrender yourself wholly and completely to the Lord, you need not even worry about your progress on the path. Have complete faith in the Lord. The wise gardener, once he has sown his seeds, has faith in their growth, and does not dig in every day to observe their growth. Thereby he would only make their growth impossible.

The devotee who has surrendered to God looks to no one except to his Lord for the fulfilment of his own wants though he fulfils the wants of others, acting for a while as an ideal friend, an ideal son, an ideal father, an ideal husband, an ideal wife, an ideal unit of society, and so on.

All virtues are manifested in the devotee who has surrendered himself to the Lord without effort, and all his vices vanish: because all vices arise from egoism and all virtues from egolessness and, the devotee having surrendered his ego to the Lord, the Lord dissolves the ego.

It is amazing that we run after the world which constantly spurns us, and turn our back upon the Lord who is ever ready to take us unto His bosom.

The man who is conscious of his virtues and his capacity for *sadhana* obtains Divine Grace after exhausting his consciousness of the same;

whereas the devotee who finds himself utterly powerless or unworthy of doing anything of his own is drawn close to God by God's own Grace. Dependence on God's Grace is the most unailing sheet anchor of the devotee.

Let the devotee tell all his organs of action and senses of perception, as well as the mind, "I am going to meet my Beloved. By your good offices I have gained full experience of the shadowy nature of the world and have done with it! You please rest now."

"I cannot now exist without You "; this call of the devotee makes him entitled to meet God. Such a devotee cannot spare any thought for the past, nor indulge in any hopes for the future; he is only restless in his yearning in the present.

It is only when one exhausts one's sense of gratification from the consciousness of one's service to fellow-beings, activities, fame, etc. that one is able to surrender oneself to God. Till one is able to surrender oneself, one should constantly and earnestly pray to God to give him the capacity for complete surrender. After turning his face to God and becoming entirely His, there are no more obligations for the devotee to discharge. By right action all propensity for egoistic action dies by itself.

Remembrance of God, concentration and meditation are not equivalent to the fullness of love, and a real devotee should not be content with them.

Let the devotee who begs for favours beg for the Bestower of favours Himself, so that he would not have to beg again and again.

Intense yearning to meet Him and restlessness without Him is a self-sufficient and final *sadhana* for the devotee. As the dawn of the sun scatters all darkness, so the awakening of deep yearning for the Godhead burns away all one's egotism, which is the root of all vices.

Just as a mother feeds her child only to the measure of its hunger, so does the Divine Mother feed us to the measure of our hunger. She, however, by Her Divine dispensation, goes on ending our temporary pleasures, to teach us renunciation of fleeting pleasures in favour of happiness eternal.

'I am His' is the *maha-mantra* for the devotee, which resolves or dissolves all his problems by God's omnipotent Grace.

We are like thirsty souls floating on infinite waters. If only we turn our face to God, our thirst will be quenched, and quenched for all time.

Even as fire turns all wood put into it into flames, so does God turn the most sinful of men, who become His, into His infinite Beatitude. For one grain of devotion offered to Him, He showers tons and tons of His Love. He who realises this ineffable greatness of God will but melt in gratitude!

Let not the *sadhaka* think that he cannot realise God because he lacks this or that quality or virtue. God cannot be purchased by any quality or virtue that there may be in mortal man. *Sadhana* is not the price of His compassion. *Sadhana* is meant only to rid us of our forgetfulness in regard to God, and to awaken in us the sole aspiration to return to Him. Such aspiration is not in the least dependent on any paraphernalia, possessions, qualities or circumstances. It is only a kindling of the feeling of kinship with God, which can take place in any circumstances. In fact, all exoteric *sadhanas* to spiritualise our lives are like irrigating the fields with waters drawn from the well; whereas to let the Divine pour into our being is like the clouds drawing water from the sea and pouring it back upon the fields to irrigate them.

Just as a faithful wife performs all actions with the sole object of pleasing her husband,

and serves her husband and his relatives and friends to please him, so does the devotee perform all actions for the sake of his Lord and to please his Lord by serving His creatures. Just as a faithful wife serves her husband for the joy of serving him, but is nevertheless looked after by her husband in all respects, so the devotee, while wanting nothing for himself except God's pleasure, is looked after by God—Who is infinitely more resourceful than the earthly husband—in all respects. Or, even as one who goes into a garden to buy fruits obtains shade and pure air automatically, so the devotee has all his wants fulfilled when he turns his face to the Divine.

Those who approach God for the fulfilment of any personal desires often turn away from Him after the fulfilment of desires. True love of God is not for what God could give or gives, but for Himself.

Whatever things—including one's mind and body—are dedicated to God become purified and turn into tools of worship.

Pleasure, pain, fear, anxiety, etc., hold no sway over the devotee. The feeling of kinship with God—to feel as a veritable child of God—is the most direct approach to Him. To make the best and most righteous use of one's

environment is the best outer *sadhana* for the devotee. To distribute the pleasures which come to him in the service of others, and to learn the lesson of renunciation from all the pain that comes, are the spontaneous characteristics of his conduct.

The devotee is only a soldier of God. Even a mountain-like piece of work is not a strain on him when it is the will of God that he should do it. The devotee has no power of his own; but the source of his power is the unlimited power of God Himself when He wills to do a thing through him.

The devotee regards every activity of his as an instrument of worship. Therefore, in his inner mind there is no difference between one activity and another, between a small piece of work and a big work, between one aspect of activity and another. For him, all work becomes worship; for all his work is "unto God", a part played by him on His stage for His pleasure.

God, indeed, yearns for the devotee who yearns for Him! But such a devotee is utterly indifferent to all else; even in suffering he rejoices in his Lord's will for him. Most people, however, think of God or pray to Him for some desired objects, or for pleasant circumstances, not for Him.

As water is drawn up to the source when its flow is plugged, so is man drawn up to the Divine when he withdraws himself from the objects of the senses and stands *alone*, naked, renouncing his body and mind and their relationships—the spark returning to the Flame, the *jiva* returning to the bosom of his Father.

One-pointedness is the essence of devotion. Just as to the seeker of sense-objects his religious performances are tantamount to self-seeking and self-indulgence, so to the aspirant for God all his spontaneous works become modes of worship.

There may be said to be five stages on the path of devotion. First, acceptance; second, faith; third, relationship, *i.e.*, the forging of the 'link'; fourth, constant remembrance; and the fifth—love or *bhakti* unbroken, which is the fruit of self-surrender.

As we realise the oceanic greatness, grace and compassion of God, all desire for sense-objects melts away, and the child of man is reborn as the Child of God. The 'twice-born' child is drawn close to God by the very ecstasy of his newly discovered *kinship* with his Father. The need for outer *sadhanas* is then exhausted for him; the panorama is found changed; a silent 'revolution' has taken place;

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he seeks no more favours of God, but only delights in *total* surrender to the Lord of Love, infinite and ineffable.

Self-surrender, therefore, is the ultimate *sadhana* on the path of devotion; there is nothing else to do for one who catches a glimpse of the infinite ocean of God's Grace and His unbounded compassion. It is a heavenly nectar which comes to those who have dissolved all self-consciousness and pride, and whose desires have all fused into the single desire of meeting the Beloved. Such a devotee does not have to wait for God, but God awaits him.

CHAPTER XV

SPARKS OF WISDOM

(1)

The Three Paths

THE three well-known paths of the pilgrim of the Spirit—*karma*, *bhakti* and *gnana*—are but the fields of extension for the three inherent qualities of man: *kriya-shakti*, *bhava-shakti* and *vichara-shakti*.

The best use of *kriya-shakti* is selfless service of fellow-beings, which melts away selfishness and egoism and unites one with the One Life. The best use of *bhava-shakti* is the kindling of love for God, which draws the devotee closer and closer to the Divine. The best use of *vichara-shakti* is the awakening of the quest for Truth, which culminates in Self-realisation.

In *gnana-yoga* action remains in the form of renunciation, and *bhava* as an under-current. In *bhakti-yoga* action remains in the form of selfless service, and *gnana* as the hidden light of the goal. In *karma-yoga*, *bhava* takes the

form of renunciation of all selfishness, and *gnana* the form of unity with the all-pervading One Life.

To the *karma-yogi* all work resolves into worship. The *bhakti-yogi* sees but his Lord everywhere and in everything. The *gnana-yogi* rejoices in the Self, with the Self.

The three paths merge into one and the same goal, where there is perfect unity. The differences appear only in emphasis on the surface along the pathways.

(2)

The Four Asramas

Brahmacharyasrama is that stage of life in which man diligently seeks to acquire discrimination between right action and wrong action and garners wisdom through study and character-building (including also body-building).

Grahashtasrama is that stage of life in which whatever attachment to pleasures of the senses one finds oneself unable to discard through deep thought, one does through the experience of the same, subject to a code of discipline and the rules prescribed by *dharma*, and thereby rises above them and serves the other three *asramas*.

Vanaprasthasrama is that stage of life in which one acquires dispassion for the world of the senses through the experience of *grahasthasrama* and thereby learns to control one's mind and senses by *tapa* and through contemplation of the Divine and service to society.

Sanyasasrama implies the erasing of all distinctions of stages and a one-pointed effort to realise Truth or the Divine.

(8)

Some Current Terms

God—He without realising Whom one can never attain true peace is God.

Bhajana—Not to rest in peace without realising God is true *bhajana*.

Ananda—Only when one rises above pleasure and pain will one experience *ananda*.

Mind—Mind is another name for the bundle of one's desires and thoughts.

Poverty—Dependence on the world for one's fulfilment is poverty.

Dharma—*Dharma* is the captain of the soul in *pravritti*. It leads one by righteous *pravritti* to *nivritti*. As purified arsenic cures diseases, so does even indulgence in *pravritti* in the light of *dharma* makes one rise above it.

Dharma is one. Just as on the railway platform they shout "Hindu water" and "Muslim water", etc., though the water is neither Hindu nor Muslim, so *dharma* is one, even though different groups of people call it by different names, according to their own imaginary limitations.

Just as science is not the invention of scientists but is their discovery, so is *dharma* not the invention of sages but their discovery. Discovery is always of what already exists. *Dharma* does not consist in books. It is the light of *viveka*.

Prayer, etc.—Prayer is the strengthening of aspiration, and denotes spiritual hunger. Worship is the deepening of prayer and denotes the establishment of relationship. *Stuti* is the outpouring—whether vocal or mental—of what the devotee experiences in the deeper regions of his consciousness as a fruit of prayer and worship.

In *japa* action predominates. In *smarana* action and feeling go together. In *chintan* feeling predominates over action. In *dhyana* feeling only remains. In *samadhi* various feelings merge into one feeling.

Raga and *Dvesha*—To perceive the good and not to be able to make it one's own is *dvesha*.

To perceive an evil and not to be able to renounce it is *raga*.

Sin and Virtue—For the beginner, to act against the *dharma* of whatever one believes himself to be (father, mother, son, brother, citizen, etc.) is sin; while to act according to the *dharma* of whatever one believes himself to be is virtue. Then, whatever subjects one to limitation, dependence and inertia is sin, while whatever takes one to the unlimited, to freedom and to self-effulgence is virtue. Finally, all that springs from one's identifying oneself with the body and the world is sin, while all that emanates from transcending the body-consciousness is virtue. The dissolution of the ego is the supreme virtue, while ego-consciousness is the root of sin.

Maya—*Maya* is of two kinds: (1) *gunmayee maya* appears in the form of indulgence in desires, but disappears after giving experience of the transitoriness of such indulgence; (2) *yoga maya* awakens the desire for eternal life, eternal *rasa*, i.e., God or Truth. It consumes *gunmayee maya* and makes the aspirant one with God.

Gunmayee maya arouses desires; *yoga maya* arouses *bhakti* and *jigyasa*. *Yoga maya* comes by itself. *Gunmayee maya* overlies *yoga maya*

for a while, but is powerless to destroy it; while *yoga maya* consumes *gunmayee maya* and unites the aspirant with his Lord.

Love and Attachment—All attachment is only with that which is not ours; what is ours is ours in its very nature, and no question of attachment arises. Attachment is always with the limited and changing; love or *yoga* with the Eternal and Immutable. The latter relates to the unity of the substratum; the former to the diversity of manifestation, giving rise to conflict and fanaticism.

Love makes a man give without reservations, whereas attachment makes one a beggar; for love is free while attachment makes one a slave. The latter feeds the 'I' and strengthens the body-consciousness; whereas the former is a bringer of joy.

All attempt to hold fast to the assumed 'I' is symptom of attachment, and is futile, for untruth must ultimately be consumed by Truth.

Attachment to the fleeting does good neither to the person who attaches himself nor to the person or object to which he attaches himself.

Love consumes all desires because it is self-existent and not dependent on any other.

(4)

Service involves the giving of all that we have accumulated, including our capacity and talents; while love involves the giving of ourselves. As various streams flow from the holy Himalayas, irrigating the vast lands, so do incalculable streams of service flow from a heart full of love, nourishing all living beings. Love unites one with the Real, and service helps fellow-men; love lends life to action, while service feeds the glow of love.

(5)

For him who is a man of many possessions, including ability, the *sadhana* is proportionately harder: for the man of humble possessions, it is easier of performance. For instance, a wealthy person going on a pilgrimage has to spend more on travel and other paraphernalia as well as rituals; but a poor man works his way within his humble resources. The fruit of the pilgrimage is shared equally by either.

(6)

There can be no object, state or set of circumstances which does not derive sustenance from associating with our 'I'; yet we forget this and allow objects, states and circumstances to enslave us in turn !

(7)

The value of *satsang* among *sadhakas* is like that of two lamps, each lighting up the darkness at the bottom of the other; even so the meeting together of *sadhakas* with faith in and love for one another benefits each and all of them.

(8)

All that is required to find one's *guru* is the awakening of the want and longing for the *guru*.

(9)

Stages may exist on the path, but there is no question of stages in the goal. The goal of man is Self-realisation. Self-realisation is never partial. What is partial is not Self-realisation.

(10)

Should one fear that it is not possible to retain one's so-called life without things, let him reflect if it is possible to retain it with things !

(11)

Any manifestation of beauty should offer the *sadhaka* a foretaste of the Divine which lends life to all forms.

(12)

Any happiness which falls to our lot is for sharing and serving, not for self-indulgence ;

any pain which falls to our lot is for awakening true renunciation in us, not to put us to fright.

(13)

The world raises fear in those who seek to misappropriate its objects to themselves.

(14)

A life of *sadhana* is the best propaganda for *sadhana*.

(15)

The transitory life is but a yearning for Life Eternal. In that it finds its fulfilment.

(16)

Infinite is the love of the Lord Who has created us. What cause is there for any fear or anxiety if we do not turn our backs upon Him?

(17)

No sane man would indulge in a pleasure which breeds pain, a life which culminates in death and a *sanyoga* which results in *viyoga*.

(18)

The greedy man, in fact, always remains in want; for the law of Nature yields its treasures only to the non-greedy. Greed corrodes the greedy man as well as all those with whom he has dealings.

(19)

The labourer in a mill says, "The mill is mine"; the manager or the engineer also says,

"The mill is mine"—implying thereby that the mill is their sphere of work. Only in that sense have we the right to say, "The body is mine".

(20)

Individual *satsang*—i.e., the individual attuning himself to the *Sat* in him—is the essential pre-requisite for fruitful collective *satsang*.

(21)

We are in want only so long as we are attached to possessions.

(22)

Love is not something which can be attained by any action or series of actions. The *sadhana* of love is desirelessness.

(23)

We suffer more by the desire for things than by the lack of things.

(24)

The best service of the body is to make it self-controlled and calm. An indulgence of the body which tends to taint the subtle body is not service to oneself; for the physical body lasts only for the lifetime, whereas the subtle bodies of men are carried over beyond death. Therefore, it is foolish to taint the subtle bodies with violence, greed, dishonesty or attachment.

(25)

Faith in many undermines faith in the One; and partial knowledge suppresses the quest for true knowledge.

(26)

Just as languages differ even when they express the same thing, so *sadhanas* differ, though they drive to the same goal.

(27)

To despair of Truth—in which we live and have our being—and to hope and desire for the shadow which is untruth, is our greatest delusion.

It is amazing that we get charmed by, and lost in, the very objects which derive their light and life from our real Self. It is like the clouds, which derive their existence from the sun, hiding the sun itself. But as surely as the heat of the sun soon dissolves the clouds, so shall the light of the Self dissolve our illusion, which is a temporary phenomenon in Nature.

(28)

The wise perceive pain in pleasure and put an end to pain thereby. They never run after pleasure which begins in pain and ends in pain.

(29)

It is an irony that our faith in things has robbed us of faith in Him from Whom all

things derive their existence and into Whom they merge, like the waves in the ocean.

(30)

Just as the waves cannot be separated from the ocean, even so all life, all light and all power is God's: we are like tiny waves for-
getting that we derive our lives but from the ocean that is God.

(31)

Death ends man's relationship with material objects only in a physical sense, but renunciation ends the relationship with them in the higher psychological sense, and gives a foretaste of immortality in life.

(32)

The object of sight is one, but the angles of vision are many. Even so Truth is one, but we see it from different levels.

(33)

True spiritual life is effortless awareness. Effort is only visible in the elementary stages of *sadhana*.

(34)

Dislike is not renunciation, it is attachment through dislike.

(35)

It is far better to be good in one's own conscience than to feed ourselves on the

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opinions and testimonials of others about our goodness; for they only drive and hide the evil deeper into our being.

(36)

Freedom from fear can never be attained unless one rises above ephemeral life. Only he can be free from all fear whose mind is detached and is not a slave of any desired set of things or circumstances.

(37)

The world is too much in our contemplation, which leaves no room for the contemplation of God. In proportion as we shed the contemplation of the world that is a mirage, our minds will receive the light of God that is Truth.

(38)

To do evil in return for evil and good in return for good is a characteristic of the animal; to do good in return for evil is the characteristic of man.

(39)

Everyone can give at least respect to elders and affection to the younger ones.

(40)

To find fault with others is a disservice; to make another realise his own error is a service.

(41)

The real significance of power is not its exercise over others, but that no opposition or unfavourable circumstances should disturb the equanimity of man. True power is the capacity of man to withstand any unfavourable circumstances or opposition, without their being able to affect the aim, the efficiency, the devotion to duty and the values of man. Greed and attachment are the worst enemies of real power.

(42)

If God were not an Ocean of Mercy, then a liar would lose his tongue the moment he told a lie, the air would withdraw from the erring man dropping him dead, and so on. Forgiveness of the faults of others and renunciation of one's own claims are the marks of the true man. But forgiveness that is due to one's powerlessness or attachment, and renunciation that is due to anger are not real forgiveness or renunciation: even *asuras* resort to charities, austerities and learning.

(43)

A perfect man does what should be done, spontaneously. Exoteric religion only *makes* him do what should indeed be done spontaneously.

(44)

The generosity of a man gives rise to renunciation in others ; renunciation in a man gives rise to generosity in others.

(45)

The Lord is hidden ; but His law is manifest.

(46)

Many *sadhakas* make concepts of Truth while they are still attached to untruth. These concepts have no relation to Truth. Truth dawns only when *vairagya* is complete. *Vairagya* is the dying of the ego. The death of the ego is resurrection into Immortality. Any concepts of its deliverer by the ego must in their very nature be caricatures of the same.

(47)

Just as one who prepares to sleep is not able to know the moment at which he goes to sleep, so is one yearning for the Beloved not able to name the moment when the completion of true *vairagya* yields to realisation. Words or thoughts cannot enlighten us about it, they can at best serve as pointers.

(48)

Imagine a household in which every individual has to keep a pistol by his bedside for his protection ! Even so, the wise are shocked by the distrust and hostility which leads the

various countries and nations to live in constant fear of one another.

(49)

Never consider another to be the cause of your suffering. Suffering is always the result of one's own deeds or faults.

(50)

Every event in one's life has a lesson to teach. The thoughtful imbibe the lesson and forget the incident. The thoughtless forget the lesson but keep thinking about the event.

(51)

As the pure water of a river, on being confined into a pit, gives rise to various germs and diseases, so does love, when confined into a body or an object, turn into *moha* and give rise to various evils.

(52)

A remorseful sinner is dearer to God than a *yogi* proud of his *yoga*.

(53)

Tyaga and death amount to the same thing. Death of the body, however, causes fresh birth; whereas *tyaga* unites one with God.

Tapa is the ending of all *pravritti* which can be a source of harm to others. Service is the awakening of love for fellow-beings. Not to regard anything as ours is renunciation. To

become entirely His is kinship with the Divine.

What is to be renounced? The *sadhaka* has to renounce all those things which are perpetually disowning him. Voluntary renunciation of these will not cause their remembrance through attachment. On the other hand, when they disown us, our attachment to them causes remembrance of the same and prevents remembrance of Truth. Everything objective, including the body, is constantly disowning us. Therefore, to realise that nothing outward or objective is ours or our true self and to detach ourselves from and rise above these is renunciation of untruth; and renunciation of untruth is the veritable lever for realisation of Truth. The *sadhaka* has to maintain the same relationship with his body as with the world.

(54)

Just as in the dream-world the world of the wakeful state is left behind and the dream-world is left behind in the world of the wakeful state, so both these worlds are left behind in Self-realisation; and the Self can live without the world as in the dream-world one can live without the world of the wakeful state.

(55)

Remembrance of one is 'disremembrance' of another. Our remembrance of God is incomplete unless it makes us turn our back upon all else. The reason why many of us obtain poor results from reciting God's name, etc., is that our *japa*, etc., are not whole-hearted. Complete action should merge in *bhava*, and complete *bhava* in *gnana*.

(56)

To bear cheerfully the non-fulfilment of one's desires is true *tapa*, and not to be elated by and attached to the fleeting pleasures of the fulfilment of desires is true *tyaga*.

(57)

A spiritual aspirant at the cross-roads may sometimes wonder whether the attainment of Life Divine, which is the hidden goal of man's ephemeral life on earth, bears no relationship with, or leaves no impress on, the latter. That is to say, if the spiritual fulfilment of a seeker is not a loss to the 'world'! A little reflection will show that it is just the reverse. Spiritual realisation, indeed, results in sublimating one's life 'in the world', which, in the placid waters of spiritual realisation, reflects spiritual verities. Even as a painter portrays his vision through his paintings, the effulgence of spiritual

realisation shines through the outer life of a Self-realised soul; for his actions, thoughts and feelings are inspired by love and illumined by *viveka*, and his life in the world becomes an embodiment or a symbol of love and *viveka*. That is what marks out the saints and sages of humanity as 'light-houses' in the stormy sea of ephemeral life for all times to come. On the other hand, all ego-born achievements of men fade away in course of time, for in truth there is nothing in 'life' which can be retained but its spiritual essence. It is the atom of the 'I' which hides Life Eternal from mortal life. With the splitting of this atom Life Eternal is perceived in all existence; and everything—the mind, the senses and the body—becomes *chinmaya*. But this mystery is understood only by those who have had a fore-taste of the Divine.

(58)

Why do our eyes not see Eternal Beauty?
Because they are content to play with the
fleeting forms of beauty.

Why does not the mind find Eternal *Rasa*?
Because it contents itself with fleeting pleasures.

Why does not this 'I' attain Eternal Life?
Because it contents itself with transitory life.

CHAPTER XVI

LIGHTS ON SADHANA

(1)

Sadhanas of *nivritti* can broadly be divided into two types—one of the man of thought, who sees through the fleeting changefulness of all manifestation; and the other of the man of devotion who pins his simple faith in the Power behind all manifestation. *Sadhana* for the former is renunciation; for the latter, self-surrender. The destination of both is the same; only, for the former knowledge precedes belief, whereas for the latter belief precedes knowledge. Faith is inherent in knowledge and knowledge is inherent in faith. The quest of the seeker on the path of knowledge leads to what is termed Self-realisation; the devotion of the devotee leads to what is called God-realisation. There is difference in approach, but no difference when the goal is reached. Not to respect what one knows and not to remain firm in faith are the respective

weaknesses of the *sadhaka* on the two paths of knowledge and devotion.

(2)

All *pravrittis* through which we expect to gain happiness from any objects, individuals or circumstances only feed the ego or body-consciousness and breed greed, attachment, etc. But such *pravrittis* as are motivated by the desire to serve others and to make others happy help to liberate us from attachment and greed. Such *pravrittis* should not be tainted by the least consciousness of virtue, *e.g.*, 'I am desireless', etc.; for consciousness of virtue is the seed of evil, and consciousness of the finite hides the Infinite. Service or *pravritti* for the benefit of others is, from the higher point of view, only a *prayaschit* for one's past misappropriation; and by such *pravritti* we only redeem the debt to society which we incurred when we had stretched our hands before the world for our fulfilment! Such *pravritti* makes for a righteous social order, for it releases love.

(3)

Desirelessness is not possible as long as we relish the false lure of fulfilment of *sankalpas*, and tolerate the latent agony of the birth of *sankalpas*. The fulfilment of any *sankalpa* means only the birth of a different set of

objects, but there can be no objects which are not in a state of perpetual flux and therefore devoid of any promise of fulfilment. Zero, multiplied by billions of zeros, might appear to be dazzling, but it remains zero !

(4)

Some people fear that *sadhana* is a hard job. This is a misapprehension, and is due either to one's resorting to *sadhana* before one's want for the object of *sadhana* is truly awakened—e.g., resorting to *sadhana* in a fit of passing emotion—or to lack of faith, or to the *sadhana* not being in accordance with one's own *swabhava* but being adopted in imitation of a sanctified tradition. Tradition—though it be the injunction of the *shastras*—is a valuable pointer, but there it exhausts its value. *Sadhana* must be fresh like a blooming flower of the heart, not a dead weight of tradition. The spontaneous urge of the heart, arising from one's own *viveka*, never tires one or appears hard; what tires or appears hard is what is done at another's behest, at the behest of another's *viveka*.

To a thirsty man, the drinking of water is never a hard job.

Complexes are also created when one prematurely undertakes the *sadhana* of *nivritti*,

before resolving *pravritti* by a righteous and complete discharge of one's duties according to one's propensities and circumstances in the light of *dharma*.

The right choice of one's *sadhana* has to be made according to one's *swabhava*—the measure of one's *viveka-shakti*, *kriya-shakti* and *bhava-shakti*. The goal is one and the same : *gnana* for the seeker of Truth, *yoga* for the *yogi*, God for the devotee.

(5)

Right action is better than wrong action ; better than right action is the feeling of non-doership. To surrender our actions, feelings and knowledge is the way to realise God. We cannot realise Him by surrendering only one of the three.

(6)

So long as man has the least trace of desire, duty must remain the captain of his *sadhana*.

(7)

To separate our so-called worldly life from our spiritual *sadhana* in two separate watertight compartments is a delusion.

(8)

As the wood, on being consumed by fire, merges in the fire, so does the servant merge

in service, the devotee in the Lord, the lover in the Beloved, becoming one with the goal.

All that the *sadhaka* can do or has to do consists in purifying his nature. *Yoga, gnana* and love shall fill the *sadhaka's* consciousness the moment he has purified himself; for they are his real nature. They are only kept out by our indulgence in the world of the senses.

We are but actors on the stage. Acting the part allotted is not the true life of man. Acting is only a game we play. One has only to step out of the stage to realise his true nature.

Renunciation and service of fellow-beings are two sides of the same coin. The thought-aspect of service is renunciation; the active phase of renunciation is service.

(9)

Suffering borne willingly and cheerfully, without resentment, is transformed into *tapa*. Suffering as such wears out the result of evil actions; whereas *tapa* cuts at the root of evil actions themselves.

Even as the body takes food and water, so is *satsang* the food of the soul. *Satsang* is the best aid to the awakening of *viveka*, which in

fact distinguishes man from the animal. *Satsang* can be had through the fellowship of saints and devotees, of spiritual literature and, above all, of the all-pervading Divine through control of speech and outgoing thought—true, inner solitude.

(10)

The following hints will be found useful by a spiritual aspirant :

1. Unswerving faith in one's *Ishta* ;
2. Devotion to one's *swadharma* ;
3. Fidelity to such *viveka* as is unveiled to one ;
4. Goodwill for all ;
5. Control of the senses ;
6. Avoidance of aimless thoughts or brooding ;
7. Not to repeat one's past errors ;
8. Making good use of time ; and
9. *Tyaga*.

(11)

We cannot *add* Truth or God to our many possessions, as misled by the subtle conceit of the ego many a *sadhaka* seeks to do. Ego cannot cheat God, it can only cheat itself. We have to surrender ourselves completely and utterly to Truth, which is the reality of our true being.

(12)

Control of the senses is essential for the *sadhaka*. But it is only a palliative. The *sadhaka* must not be content until he has transcended the senses.

(13)

A true *sadhaka* is never left in the dark. The smallest *sadhana*, sincerely performed, finds the next step automatically illumined, with all the necessary *shakti*.

(14)

Suffering and disease is Nature-dispensed *tapa*. The ordinary man groans under suffering and disease, and hence at best is relieved of the results of evil deeds. For a *sadhaka*, who voluntarily and cheerfully accepts and wears out the same, suffering and disease become *tapa*, which relieves him not only of the results of evil deeds, but of the very roots of evil deeds, and leads him to peace.

(15)

A *sadhaka* who has not yet realised God or the Self should refrain from becoming a leader, propagator or *guru*. For that makes him look into the faults of others and hide his own faults and be conscious of his virtues—which makes his mind impure. In the realm of spirituality only a person who has attained

Self-realisation has the right to be a *guru*, leader or preacher.

(16)

One who makes a pose of *sadhana* is much worse than one who does not do any *sadhana*. The latter may any day awaken to his own want and become a *sadhaka*; but the former, who feeds his pose of *sadhana* by the honour and fame he receives thereby, is hard to reclaim.

(17)

No *sadhana* is big or small; what makes it big or small is the proportion of what one puts of oneself into it. For instance, if one puts one's whole being into the remembrance of God even for five minutes each day, that would carry one much farther than one who gives five hours each day to the worship of God but only half-heartedly.

(18)

The *sadhaka* should remain calm and unaffected by whatever *falls to his lot*, but extremely vigilant about what he himself *does*. That is to say, be wary in all you *do*, but be cheerful in whatever is dispensed to you.

(19)

The *sadhaka* should have faith in his *sadhana*. If firmly set on the path, he would realise in.

due course that in reality the path and the goal are one. Even to scrutinise one's spiritual progress is an obstacle to progress, just as a gardener who pulls out the seed from time to time to observe its growth makes its growth impossible! Men who insure their lives with an insurance company—which is liable to fail—do trust the company and feel secure about the risk covered by the company. Surely, it hardly befits a *sadhaka* to trust God and His unfailing dispensation the less!

(20)

Many *sadhakas*, instead of remaining contented with their material environment and possessions, and of feeling discontented with and tireless in their efforts for spiritual advancement in a spirit of 'divine discontent', do just the reverse. They exhibit infinite contentment with their routine *sadhana* and amazing patience in the matter of advancing to their goal, though they betray acute discontentment with their material lot! This indicates a want of *sincerity of purpose*, without which all paraphernalia of *sadhana* is a mockery.

(21)

What distinguishes a *sadhaka* from the ordinary man of the world is that whereas the latter runs after manifold desires, the desires

of the former have fused into one central desire (aspiration). The man of the world is not content with his possessions and is restless in pursuit of more and more objects of his desires. The *sadhaka* should be indifferent to material possessions; for his desires have fused into a single desire to realise God or Truth. But in pursuit of this sole desire he is expected to be at least as earnest and tireless in his high endeavour as the man of the world is in his pursuit of manifold objects of his desire.

(22)

If we examine why, in spite of our awareness of our obligations and duties, we do not become imbued solely with dutifulness, it will be observed that there are two levels of awareness—reason and sense-organs; between them is *mana*. The *mana* of some is under the sole influence of the sense-organs; in whose case the question of duty hardly arises. There are others whose *mana* is under the sole influence of *buddhi*, who, in consequence, are instinctively dutiful. The question of the *sadhana* of dutifulness arises only for those people whose *mana* is under the influence both of *buddhi* on the one hand and of the sense-organs on the other hand. The awareness of the sense-organs points towards indulgence, whereas the

awareness of *buddhi* tends to expose the phantasmagoria. Most of us are caught in the tug-of-war between the light of *buddhi* and the darkness of the sense-organs. When the sense-organs merge into the *mana*, the *mana* into *buddhi* and *buddhi* into its light-giver, the *sadhaka* achieves his goal. But this is possible only when all the *sankalpas* of the *sadhaka* are illumined and inspired by *viveka* and all the impure *sankalpas* born of *aviveka* have exhausted themselves. The renunciation of impure *sankalpas* is the first base of *sadhana*. The fulfilment of pure *sankalpas* is the second. Not to be bound by the satisfaction and happiness of the fulfilment of pure *sankalpas* is the third base. The merging of the *mana* in *buddhi* is the fourth. When *buddhi* has thus attained perfect tranquillity, it abides in its home—in Peace Divine—which is the fifth base. The *sadhaka* should introspect and start his *sadhana* from whichever level holds true in his case. It is the law of Nature that the fulfilment of one automatically leads to the next stage.

(23)

The emergence and fulfilment of, and release from, *sankalpas* are stages or states. Such *sadhakas* alone as do not get bound by the pain of the rise of *sankalpas* or by the pleasure of

their fulfilment, or even by the peace of their subsidence, are kindled by the fire of deeper aspiration.

(24)

The test of righteous *pravritti* is whether we are doing to others what we would like others to do to us.

(25)

The rising of good *sankalpas*, i.e., those for the service of others, is the path of *pravritti* and the non-emergence of *sankalpas* is the path of *nivritti*. Right use of the former leads to the latter, in which state one feels oneself devoid of any power or quality of one's own to enable one to do anything even for the service of others. When that comes about the Grace of the Infinite begins to manifest and work through the *sadhaka*. The ego dies and gives place to the Infinite, in Whom there is no lassitude or failure.

(26)

A major obstacle to *sadhana* is the habit of looking into the faults of others. The true *sadhaka* is always vigilant in detecting and removing his own faults; but he never finds faults in others. The intellect is misdirected when, instead of being devoted to self-introspection, it is extroverted into finding fault in

others. This tendency to look into the faults of others is a deeper malady than any faults of one's own. The latter can be eradicated by remorse and prayer, but the former continues to feed on the illusion of complacency which it generates.

One has no right or justification to look into the faults of others only to feed one's own pride. It is only when another's faults fill a man with sorrow and the *sadhaka* does not spare himself in toiling to relieve him of the same—which means atonement and service in a spirit of humility—has the true *sadhaka* any right to look into another's faults.

Man's life is a life for *sadhana*, and there is no room therein for wastage of the resources allotted to him. There is no greater wastage than misdirecting our thoughts into looking into others' faults, instead of introspecting our own faults which is our allotted task to eradicate. To others our love alone should flow through service.

(27)

Just as no medicine is big or small, high or low, good or bad in itself, but is appropriate to the disease for which it is meant, so no *sadhana* is big or small, high or low in itself, but it helps the *sadhaka* to whom it is suited. Just

as the diseases of no two patients may be exactly alike, so no two *sadhakas* may find the same *sadhana* suiting them. But what is common to all *sadhakas* is the goal and the love inspiring each *sadhana*. And just as a patient cannot be rid of the disease by merely praising the medicine, but can only be cured by taking it according to the directions of the physician, so a *sadhaka* cannot achieve what he wants by fanatically applauding his *sadhana*, his *guru* or guide or prophet, without transmuting his life according to their teachings.

(28)

The root of all evil deeds is desire, *i.e.*, laying our claims before the world; the root of all good deeds is living only to redeem the claims of others. In case one happens to feel that one has not the necessary power to engage in fulfilling the claims of others—*i.e.*, to serve others—the smallest yet the most effective *sadhana* is not to wish ill of anyone. Thus, the lack of power or ability is not an obstacle to *sadhana*; a misuse of power and ability alone is the obstacle.

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(29)

We meet with failure in *sadhana* when our selfishness does not transform itself into

public service and public service into spontaneous *nivritti*. True *sadhana* begins when selfishness—i.e., the seeking of happiness from others—begins to melt and only when work is done for the benefit of others. But even such work is a great obstacle to liberation, if it creates a sense of pride of one's work or virtues; for in that case it will maintain exterior appearances of *sadhana*, but undermine the essence of *sadhana* from within.

Intense yearning for the goal or the Beloved keeps the *sadhana* alive and powerful and assuredly leads to the goal. Without such yearning, *sadhana* becomes a mechanical and stagnant thing, and makes us wait for the future to yield results instead of reaping the same in the present; for true *sadhana* and the goal both relate to the present. *Sadhana* is not for what is born and dies or for what is subject to the vicissitudes of time and space, but for that which is ever present, eternal and immanent. Intense yearning is the sole prop of the *sadhaka*—and not any object, state, etc., nor any ornamentation of the body, the sense-organs or the mind. When the whole life of the *sadhaka* becomes one belief, one relationship and one aspiration it consumes everything that comes in the way and unites him with

the Beloved. Truth is attained by the renunciation of untruth, not through untruth. Only right means can lead to right ends.

(30)

The *sadhaka* should never despair as to how the agelong attachment to the body can be renounced in a moment by the grace of *viveka*; for he knows that an agelong dark corner is illuminated by a spark of light in no time! Nor should the *sadhaka* be affrighted by the sight of some faults continuing to infest his outer life; for even after the disappearance of the cause the working out of some effect of past causes may take some time but they get exhausted of themselves, as even after cutting the root of a tree the outer parts and the leaves of the same remain green for a while, but dry up by themselves within a short time.

(31)

The high-water-mark of effort is the right use of what is given to one. This is the climax of the path of action. On the path of devotion the devotee starts by realising that he is nothing and, therefore, he surrenders himself to the Lord. All effort arises from the 'I', i.e., the ego; so, there can be no effort that will lead to the elimination of that ego. The rejection of the 'I' and 'mine' is the final

effort, whereas the actual dissolution of the ego, which is synonymous with Self-realisation, is an *effortless* experience.

CHAPTER XVII

MOOK SATSANG—SILENT COMMUNION WITH THE ABSOLUTE

Mook satsang—Silent Communion with the Absolute—is the hidden base as well as the hidden apex of all the *sadhanas*. It lends glow to the *bhakti* of the devotee and the *jigyasa* of the *jigyasu*, and imparts *shakti* to the worker. It contradicts no approach to Truth, no religion or school of thought; indeed, it is a friend, philosopher and guide to each on his own path.

Mook satsang is the final *sadhana* for purifying oneself from all the accumulated associations of the ages. It begins by saying "not this, not this" to all the scenes that appear on the screen of the mind, harmonises the conflicts that arise in the course, and ends only when it dissolves the ego.

Mook satsang leads to the realisation by man of what he really is, not what he has long assumed himself to be: man, woman; Indian, European; father, brother, or son; Hindu,

Muslim or Christian; and so on. Man, at the substratum, is only a yearning for Love or quest for Truth, Beauty, Joy; he can fulfil his mission only when he attains his unity with the same, which is God, the Self or by whatever name we may call that nameless Reality. The gamut of human evolution is to that end, without the quest for which man's life on earth would be futile.

Mook satsang is the *brahmacharya* of the sense-organs of man—which is true *pratyahara*—for in *mook satsang* they find their true repose. It is a state of true *mauna*, of effortless awareness, and of unity in diversity.

Desirelessness, effortlessness and the realisation of unity are the three pillars of *mook satsang*.

Mook satsang affords true repose. To retain equanimity in all states is true repose. We can retain equanimity only if we remain awake to the fleeting nature of every object, every state and every circumstance.

True repose is not laziness or 'do-nothingness', for these are not the marks of life. Repose is that state from which all actions arise and into which they dissolve. Thus, the base of all action is also repose. Deep sleep gives temporary rest to the mind, equanimity affords

permanent repose. Equanimity means the subsidence of unnecessary or evil *sankalpas* and non-indulgence in the pleasure of the fulfilment of necessary or good *sankalpas*. Right use of our allotted circumstances, without egoistic attachment, yields true repose.

Repose is both a means and an end. It is the base which gives power, whose right use gives permanent repose. The supreme obstacle to rest is the craving for pleasure of the senses and the desire for unobtained objects, circumstances or states. This can be overcome only by our detaching ourselves from the body, and that can be achieved only by right use of what is given to us, i.e., service, and not by cogitating over what is not given to us.

Unlimited is the power of Silence—true repose—for from that emanates all power. Indeed, *mook satsang* connects one with the reservoir of all power from which every *sadhana* derives its force. It, therefore, imparts light and life to all the *sadhanas*.

In Silence—true repose—is Peace Eternal. True peace does not consist in the fulfilment of desires or in pleasing circumstances and objects. True peace consists in desirelessness, which affords true repose in the Silence, the Absolute.

Mook satsang, therefore, while lending power to all, leads one from power to Peace, and merges the transitory 'I' in the master 'I' through the gateways of desirelessness and love. In this state there can be no fear of sorrow, no bondage of pleasure, no attraction, no repulsion.

True *mook satsang* is not *done*, nor is it a matter of practice; for doing and practice pertain to the ego, whereas *mook satsang* is the state of *being*, i.e., egolessness. *Mook satsang* begins where 'doing' ends. The feeling of doership suppresses the inner want of man and feeds the ego. *Mook satsang* helps the inner want of the *sadhaka* to emerge, whereby he is enabled to realise his aptitude for *sadhana*, and to pursue the *sadhana* he is fitted for, leading to the dissolution of the ego.

Dutifulness, which results in *nishkam karma*, prepares the *sadhaka* for *mook satsang*, inasmuch as *nishkam karma* ushers one to *mook satsang*.

The beginner may start by abiding in peace before commencing any action; then, performing the action with the utmost integrity, dedication and efficiency; and, at the end of it, reverting again to the state of peace.

The *sadhaka* of *mook satsang* should prepare himself for this great *sadhana* by remembering

at the very time of *pravritti* that he is separate from his body and all that relates to it, and that therefore he is not to seek any gratification therefrom. Then he will have little fear or temptation during his *mook satsang*.

Do not worry if multifarious thoughts emerge at first in the process of this *sadhana*. Look on them as a mere beholder but do not co-operate with them; and be well assured that they are only *running out* from the caverns of your mind, or that the dirt and cobwebs of many a life-time are being drawn out, the smell of which should not frighten you.

So, the appearance of suppressed desires should not frighten the *sadhaka*. They will die a natural death by his non-co-operation with them. In fact, they are merely a 'memory' of the past. Memory pretends to make the past evils real to us. By lending significance to memory we allow it to prolong our agony. We should realise that memory is only a phantom.

Mook satsang is the easiest and the most powerful *sadhana*. The mental pictures that come on the surface should cause no fear or excitement, but should be allowed to run out. With this attitude towards them, the *sadhaka* should surrender himself to Truth.

One should not indulge in mental gymnastics. In the yearning for Truth is hidden the Truth, which will reveal itself when the ego subsides—not when the ego is excited.

The *sadhaka* of *mook satsang* should not yield to any fear of the tricks of the mind, nor deviate from his straight path to cater for the demands of the mind. Non-co-operation with the effusions of the mind is the first step in the *sadhana* of *mook satsang*. All the effusions of the mind are to be treated by the *sadhaka* as just 'memory', with no existence of their own. Non-co-operation with the objects of memory will efface their memory. This will make the mind still.

The effusions of the mind arise from *aviveka*, and feed on external objects and circumstances; they die in the flash of *viveka*. In fact, from the Silence they arose; in the Silence they have their being; and in the Silence they re-merge. Communion in the Silence with Truth or the Absolute is *mook satsang*.

All *gunas* are like bubbles in the ocean of the *nirguna*; all activity so-called appertains to the ocean of transcendent inactivity.

Only, keep yourself separate—as it were in a corner of the heart which you have cleaned and reserved for yourself—from the passing

phases and projections of the mind, without attachment or fear. Such a spirit of non-co-operation may cause a feeling of loneliness in the beginning, for it would snap external relationships—*mook satsang* being a symbol of what is : of being, not of becoming. But that should not frighten you.

In due course—sooner rather than later—you will find that your path is effortless, for the awareness that true *mauna* brings about is effortless repose in its pristine nature.

Effort is born of desire; desire is born of *aviveka*. *Aviveka* can be ended only by dissociating oneself from false identifications with the body and external objects through *viveka*. When *aviveka* is consumed by *viveka*, *mook satsang* comes of its own.

On the path of devotion, self-surrender with deep faith also leads one to *mook satsang*. Self-surrender implies the complete surrender of one's desires and will to the Will of God. There is nothing left to *do* for the devotee who has surrendered himself to the Lord, and such devotee soon attains the peace and joy of *mook satsang*.

The devotee arrives at *mook satsang* by surrendering his will to the Will of God : the man of thought, by realising the illusoriness.

of all phenomena; the man of action, by discharging his duties according to the laws of Nature. They attain Love Divine, detachment from the non-Self and desirelessness, respectively, and thereby attain the bliss of repose.

Mook satsang dissolves even unfulfilled desires in the *rasa* of love.

Anyone may experiment with the *sadhana* of *mook satsang* and watch its results for oneself. One may begin by allotting a few minutes to it each day; then, as often as practicable, at convenient intervals, until it becomes a habit and one effortlessly reverts to the *sahaj* state between any two actions or thoughts and finally comes to dwell in it once for all.

Mook satsang will surprise the *sadhaka* by its quick help in dissociating his real 'I' from its agelong assumed identifications and by leading to desirelessness and the full blooming of *viveka*.

Mook satsang is a common platform for men of all shades of thought and all states and stages to walk together in their holy pilgrimage. It comes when all exoteric *sadhanas* have exhausted themselves; or, rather, all exoteric *sadhanas* find their ultimate fulfilment in *mook satsang*.

The Voice of the Silence can only be heard in true *mauna*—*mook satsang*. It is not to be confused with concentration or even meditation though these may appear as a phase, ultimately leading to it. It is, in its essence, the state of pure awareness, which is one with Truth.

Mook satsang brings out the basic unity of purpose in all the various *sadhanas*. It establishes the truth of the unity of all prayers, modes of worship, spiritual practices and philosophies.

Mook satsang is the mother of all the powers. Through it all necessary power comes by itself. It is, in fact, the source of all the discoveries or inventions, for from it they arise.

Above all, whatever could be indicated about *mook satsang* is only symbolic; in reality it is inexpressible in words, and incapable of description or illustration. For it is at once a *sadhana* as well as the *sadhya*.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q. What is the cause of sorrow ?

A. Indulgence in pleasure is the seed giving rise to the tree of sorrow. Sorrow and pleasure form a circle of ignorance.

The pleasure which comes to us by causing sorrow to another eventually turns into sorrow to ourselves, for it was born of sorrow. A pain which we take on us by giving pleasure to another, is sure to turn into *ananda*.

Q. What is *tyaga* ?

A. Absolute indifference to favourable or unfavourable environment is true *tyaga*; for attachment to favourable circumstances gives rise to *raga*, and fear of unfavourable circumstances gives rise to *dvesha*. Freedom from *raga-dvesha* is true renunciation.

Q. What is the difference between a theist and an atheist?

A. He who knows or has faith in the One Who is Eternal is a theist. He who lends his faith to the fleeting is an atheist.

Q. What is the difference between *sukha* and *ananda* ?

A. Pleasure suppresses pain, *ananda* obliterates pain. Suppressed sorrow emerges again and again, whereas sorrow obliterated never rises again.

Q. What is the difference between matter and spirit ?

A. Matter is that which derives life and light from another. Spirit is that which is self-effulgent and which gives life and light to matter.

Q. What is prayer ?

A. The strengthening of aspiration is true prayer.

Q. What are the stages of devotion ?

A. Whatever exists is His: this is first stage of devotion. Whatever there is, therein He is: He is Omnipresent—this marks the second stage of devotion. Whatever exists is He: this is the third phase of devotion. The final stage of devotion cannot be described, where there is but the One without a second.

Q. Is there a Personal God ?

A. So long as you have the least trace of desire, the One appears as a Personal God. When you become absolutely desireless, you will realise the One without a second.

Q. How does a selfless man behave in the world ?

A. He hears for the pleasure of the speaker; he eats for the pleasure of the feeder; he meets for the pleasure of the other; he speaks for the pleasure of the listener; and so on.

Q. What is the best *sadhana* for us ?

A. The cessation of desire is the best *sadhana*. So long as we are afflicted with desires, we should serve others with all our heart and soul. Selfless service will purify our hearts and rid us of desires.

Q. What is the best *sadhana* for *karma-yoga* ?

A. To perform our work with the utmost efficiency, with the purest of motives and with steadfast vision of our goal is the best *sadhana* for *karma-yoga*. As a seeker after pleasures has pleasures as his goal even while outwardly he is in prayer or worship, so does an aspirant for God have God as his goal, even while performing various actions in the world. The worship of the former is tantamount to working for his own pleasures; the work of the latter resolves into true worship.

Further, for the *sadhaka*, the form of action called for in a given situation should make no

difference to the love and sympathy in the core of his heart. Love relates to the substratum, action to the surface. There can be differences on the surface, in the forms and functions; but not in the substratum. Even if one has to shoot a person for any compelling reasons, one's heart should vibrate with pain, and love and sympathy for him, all the same. One may hate sin, but one should not hate the sinner. This principle should regulate our daily life. We are called upon to wear different poses to discharge different functions; but the basic love should remain unaffected. Even in common acts of love we express our love in different ways: the love of brother to sister, of mother to son, of husband to wife, of friend to friend, etc. The same principle should hold good even when our actions have to assume unpleasant shapes in certain events. Even the goddess appears not only as *Saraswati*¹ or *Lakshmi*², but also as *Kali*³! But surely the Divine Mother does not shed Her inherent love while assuming the form of *Kali* for the work calling for that form.

¹ Goddess of learning and wisdom.

² Goddess of wealth and prosperity.

³ Goddess of power and destruction of evil.

Q. How to realise Truth ?

A. To realise Truth one has to shed untruth—i.e., one's ego. Men ordinarily perceive and describe truth according to their own *swabhava*. A sugar-cane perceives sweetness in the earth, whereas a *chilli* perceives pungency therein. In reality the earth is endowed with innumerable qualities, and is above qualities also. To describe truth is to limit it, for the describer will only express his own perception born of his *swabhava*.

Q. How to realise God ?

A. We can realise God only when we empty ourselves of all else ; for God is all and the All can come only when there is a complete void in the heart.

Q. What is solitude ?

A. To merge our manifold thoughts and desires in one is true solitude.

Q. What is the difference between desire and the true want of man ?

A. A pursuit which attracts but whereby man achieves nothing lasting is desire. The true want of man does not bind one to *pravritti* but unites one with the Beloved.

Q. What is the virtue which removes all the faults of man ?

A. Renunciation ; for renunciation dissolves the ego which is the root of all faults and vices. Renunciation means the dissolution of body-consciousness.

Q. Who is the *guru* ?

A. The real *guru* is *viveka*—the light of God in each man. The *guru* also appears as *viveka* personified in an individual who comes to the *sadhaka* by the grace of God. Another form of *guru* is *shastra*. Yet another form of *guru* is *satsang*. To regard the body of anyone as *guru* is a delusion. There is no difference between God, Truth and *guru-tattwa*.

Q. How to get rid of body-consciousness ?

A. For a man of action, in living for the service of others only, thereby repaying the debt of the world, and not in living for any self-gratification. For the man of deep thought, by reflecting on the transitoriness of the world and dissociating himself from it. For the devotee, by regarding the body and the world as God's and not a bit of it as his own.

Q. How to attain one-pointedness of the mind ?

A. There are various ways of attaining one-pointedness of the mind, depending on the temperament, capacity and faith of the *sadhaka*. Among these, the master-key is

vairagya. Continuous practice, which is commonly prescribed and resorted to, helps in the concentration of the mind, but by itself it does not yield permanent results. It is only when the mind is rid of all desires that it spontaneously becomes one-pointed once for all. A *sadhaka* who attempts to secure one-pointedness of the mind with the aim of achieving any object, with a sense of doership, cannot become really one-pointed, because so long as one retains his separate entity as a doer or enjoyer, whatever is produced in the barren soil of the 'I' is, by its very nature, bound to fade away.

Q. Why do *dhyān* and action appear to contradict each other?

A. What is commonly observed is that if a novice-*sadhaka* is asked to do any piece of work, he does not relish it but feels that he has come for *satsang* and not to be yoked to action. Thus he does not do what he is required to do efficiently and with the whole of his heart, for he lacks the *sadhana*-consciousness in the work. If, however, he is asked to meditate on the Divine or to recite God's name then he complains that he cannot concentrate his mind. The fact is that the man immersed in action has to begin by performing his actions in the spirit of *sadhana* and

considering them as God's work. Then at the end of his actions, he will experience *yoga*, *viveka* and Love Divine. Actions performed with the motive of self-indulgence cannot lead to *sadhana* or meditation. By discharging one's duties and giving up aimless actions the mind spontaneously becomes free and one-pointed; for when there are no reactions on the mind, there is nothing left for it but to dwell on the Divine. Right action leads to *yoga*. Right action is that which is performed with an eye on the goal, with righteous motives, by righteous means, and which is performed so efficiently that the action would seem to await the doer instead of the reverse which is generally the case. Action, performed in a manner contrary to the above, will be wrong action, which can never lead to *yoga*.

Q. Is the *jiva* free or dependent?

A. The *jiva* is free to make the best use of what is allotted to him, through *viveka*. This is God-given freedom. Except for this, the *jiva* is wholly dependent; for no one is free to select the circumstances in which one is born and which are Nature's dispensations. Therefore, one who makes his happiness dependent on others—persons, objects or circumstances—remains dependent on them and never realises

freedom. All actions which he performs with a view to obtaining any desired objects become but an endless chase of a mirage. But once he turns his face away and detaches himself from the changing world of manifestation, in the light of *viveka*, he is free in the fullness of Life and Love.

So long as we are attached to the limited, our freedom is illusory—it is only a mask over abject dependence.

Q. Is there any significance in idol worship?

A. No devotee worships the idol; he only worships his deity in or through the idol. When a person reads a book or a letter, he does not read the paper on which or the ink with which it is written; he reads what is intended to be conveyed through it. The paper, the ink and the letters drawn up are only signs of expression. When Tulsidas repeated the name of '*Rama*', it was not the two short letters, '*ra*' and '*ma*' composing the word '*Rama*', which filled his mind. The name, to him, was a symbol of the Lord of the Universe, with all His Power, Love and Beauty.

Q. What is the difference between what you call *kriya* and *karma*?

A. That in which there is no egoistic sense of doership, what takes place automatically or spontaneously—even as the leaves of the tree move by the force of the wind—is *kriya*; but what a man does, impelled by motives, by attachment or resentment, is *karma*. The actions of one who believes God to be the real Doer and regards himself as only an instrument are of the former category; and they would not bind him, for they are, so to say, done through him rather than by him.

Q. Why does man fear death?

A. Man fears death because he assumes himself to be the body, and because he does not realise the significance or purpose of death in the scheme of Providence. Birth, existence and death—these three appear to us as separate and different phases. But in reality everything is changing all the time and each change is the death of one thing and the birth of another. We rejoice over the birth of a baby, but do not realise that it is only the death of one that makes for the birth of another. What people call life is really not life. It is but another name for death. The end of one phase is the beginning of another phase—even as the death of the seed is the birth of the plant, or the death of childhood is the birth of youth.

There is no state which endures as it is. Change is inherent in every fleeting moment. People look upon a certain prominent phase of flux only as death. In fact all that is perpetually changing is not life. Life eternal is that which persists through, and is the bed-rock of, all phases of life and the so-called death and birth. Life is the death of death. But it is only those who are not attached to the body and its changing phases who are able to realise this mystery.

Secondly, only those fear so-called death who have not made the best use of life. Those who have made the best use of life never fear death.

Q. What is the difference between *prem* and *moha*?

A. *Moha* has its relation to the body, *prem* has its relation to the soul and God the Omnipresent. *Moha* binds, *prem* frees from all bondage. *Moha* causes sorrow to man in a state of separation, but *prem* shines all the more in that state.

Love is that which is with the Eternal; attachment with that which is fleeting. The fleeting is but a yearning for the Eternal.

The *sadhaka* should realise that nothing can be retained for ever by the force of attachment. It is just not possible to hold the fleeting

through the exercise of fleeting thoughts or desires. No doubt, selfless *service* of the fleeting can help to detach the *sadhaka* from the same.

The *sadhaka* should, therefore, once for all determine his goal. The determination of the goal awakens true aspiration, which is the highway to the goal.

Love for the Unlimited is also unlimited. But when it is chained to things, individuals and passing phases it becomes greed, attachment, etc., even as the flowing waters of the river become the breeding ground of disease when stored in a pit. Attachment is the breeding ground of desire.

Wherever love happens to be focussed, that object will appear dear. This is a characteristic of love. But when an object first attracts you and then you feel yourself in love, know that it is attachment. That is to say, love, when it is love, precedes liking; when it is attachment, liking precedes love. Love is not caused by attraction; it can be the cause of attraction.

For the *sadhaka*, Love is a triangle—it may appear to a *sadhaka* as Universal love, or as love of the Self or as love of the Lord, depending on the temper of his approach. But in itself Love is one indivisible whole, and the only thing which really exists..

Q. What are the means to realise Truth ?

A. Sincere and earnest aspiration for Truth is its own path to Truth. Just as a big fish devours small fish and then itself dies, so does sincere and earnest aspiration for Truth consume all desires and itself ends in the realisation of Truth.

To awaken sincere and earnest aspiration for Truth, one should begin by performing all one's actions from where one is, in the spirit of *sadhana*, making one's whole life nothing but *sadhana*.

Q. How many solar systems or universes are there in the Infinite ?

A. You cannot count the numbers of even one small thing of creation or limit even one aspect of creation. You cannot tell how many trees potentially exist in one seed, for the trees which one seed gives rise to contain innumerable seeds in turn, and so on. When you cannot compute the creation arising out of one seed, how can you compute the number of solar systems or universes ! And when you cannot count these, how can you count the more subtle spheres thereof ? It is vain on the part of the mind, which cannot comprehend even the smallest part of creation, to seek to know the Infinite's infinite manifestation or creation.

In any case, all knowledge of outer manifestation—physical or superphysical—relates to the circumference. The Wisdom of the Self relates to the Centre. In that is inherent the Peace of God.

GLOSSARY

adharma : unrighteous action, unjust.

agnana : ignorance.

aham-sphurtti : emergence of the true 'I'.

aham-vritti : effusion of the false 'I', egoism.

akasha : space.

ananda : bliss, joy.

asuras : powers of evil.

aviveka : non-discrimination.

Bhagawan : Lord, God.

bhajan : prayers, devotional songs.

bhakti : devotion.

bhakti-yoga : union by devotion, the path of devotion.

bhava : feeling.

bhava-shakti : power of feeling.

bhoga : indulgence.

brahmacharyasrama : the stage of life of the celibate pupil.

buddhi : reason.

chinmaya : pervasive consciousness, self-effulgent.

chintan : concentration.

dharma : the righteous law.

dhyān : contemplation.

dvesha : aversion, animosity.

gnana : knowledge, wisdom.

gnana-yoga : union by knowledge, the path of knowledge.

grahasthasrama : the state of the householder.

gunmayee maya : power of the attributive (i.e., lower) *maya*.

guru : spiritual preceptor.

guru-tattwa : teacher-principle.

ishta : deity, ideal.

japa : recitation of God's name.

jigyasa : quest for truth.

jigyasu : seeker of truth.

jiva : soul.

karma : action, willed activity.

karma-yoga : union through selfless activity, the path of selfless work.

kartavya : duty.

kriya : spontaneous action.

kriya-shakti : power of action.

maha-mantra : spiritual master-key.

mana : mind.

mauna : cessation of thought and speech.

maya : illusion, mystic veil on creation.

moha : attachment, fascination.

moksha : liberation.

mook satsang : silent communion with the Absolute.

GLOSSARY

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nirvikalpa : transcendent quietism, undistracted.

nishkam : selfless.

nivritti : cessation of desires, transcendence.

prana : vital breath.

pratyahara : withdrawal of senses from their objects.

pravritti : pursuit of activity.

prayaschit : atonement, penance.

raga : attachment.

rasa : delight.

sadhaka : spiritual aspirant.

sadhana : spiritual discipline, spiritual practice.

sadhana-tattwa : *sadhana* principle, the essence of spiritual discipline.

sadhya : goal.

sahaj : natural.

samadhi : exalted state of trance or quietism.

samskaras : residue of impressions or mental pictures, inherent prejudices.

sankalpas : resolution, projection of the mind.

sanyasasrama : the state of total renunciation.

sanyasi : a monk who has renounced worldly ties.

sanyoga : conjunction, meeting.

satsang : holy association, spiritual company.

seva : service.

shakti : power.

shastra : scripture.

siddhi : perfection.

smarana : remembrance.

stuti : hymn.

sukh : pleasure.

sushupti : deep sleep.

swabhava : true nature.

swadharma : duty according to one's true nature.

swarupa : real nature.

tapa, tapas : austerity.

tyaga : renunciation.

upasana : worship.

vairagya : dispassion, desirelessness.

vanaprasthasrama : the state of the hermit.

vichara : thought, reasoning.

vichar shakti : power of reasoning.

vikalpas : distraction.

viveka : power of discrimination, intelligence.

viyoga : separation.

yoga : union.

yoga maya : transcendent *maya*, the mystical power
presiding over creation.
